

# **Policymaking Practice and Challenges of House of Peoples Representatives (HoPRs)**

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## **Introduction**

In any form of government the principle of separation of powers divides the state powers into three branches: the legislative, executive and judicial powers. According to this principle, adopting laws/policies is vested to the legislative; most policy initiatives are enacted into law, and thus must be approved by the legislature. The very name of this branch suggests law making and is assumed to be the primary function of legislative branch; and this function consumes considerable time and energy of the same (Birkland, 2001). Legislatures are required to identify problems, study issues, receive expert and public inputs, formulate or approve policies that are designed to remedy the problems or issues.

The extent and nature of legislatures in playing their law/policymaking role vary significantly from country to country. The legislature role in the policy making is, in the first place, dependent upon its relationship with other political institutions and actors, most notably, chief executives in presidential systems, cabinet members in parliamentary system and party elites in those systems characterized by strong political parties (David & Michael, 1991). Some legislatures are proactively able to develop their own legislative proposals and thus participate along with the executive in directing the policy agenda (Saiegh, 2008). Such legislatures are also likely to be active and effective in overseeing policy implementation (ibid). At the other end, legislatures may be fairly marginal players, serving as a rubber stamp on the executives legislative proposals and having little capacity or willingness to scrutinize the conduct of government. Although, there is a wide area between these two extremes, most scholars agree in developing countries, the impact of the legislative bodies' in public policymaking is not only much less than they are also passive instruments that can be manipulated rather than active contributors (Gridle and Thomas, 1991).

In the history of Ethiopia, the 1931 constitution was a landmark for the legislature to the present day. The constitution convened the first bicameral parliament and concisely defined the structure of the legislature to consist of two deliberative chambers. The chamber of Senate were to consist of members appointed by the emperor drawn from the nobility where as the Chamber of Deputies were appointed by the nobility and local chiefs until such time as the people were considered ready to elect the members of chambers of deputies themselves (The 1931 Constitution, Article 31 & 32). Likewise, in the 1955 revised Constitution the Senate were formed from elite groups such as the princes, high government officials and other local governments appointed by the Emperor. Differing considerably from the 1931, members of the Chamber of Deputies were elected by the people of Ethiopia. In both cases, however, the ultimate power was still in the hands of the Emperor; and the power of approving and disapproving parliamentary legislations resided on the supremacy of the monarch. The parliament was neither meant to carry out the usual functions of an elected legislature, nor was it a source of public authority. Shiferaw in Mulugeta Abebe (2005) also commented that, there had never been any channel of communication between the public and those at the top of policymaking structures; and consulting the affected parties both before and after policy decisions was not in practice.

After the downfall of the Emperor in 1974, for thirteen years, there had been no written constitution in Ethiopia that provided the constitutional base for policymaking. The Derg dissolved the imperial parliament and officially declared the establishment of a Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC, 1974). Afterwards, the policymaking had been entertained by a limited circle of Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) which had practically alleged on agenda setting and the policymaking process (Mulugeta, 2005). After the declaration of the 1987 constitution, although in theory it was claimed that public power resided in the national Assembly called National Shengo, it was the party that made policy choices and decisions in advance. This is because the constitution empowered the party to be the leading organ of the state as well as the society (Constitution, 1987). Furthermore, in the wake of the establishment of Peoples Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the newly emerging state organ, administrative and autonomous regions were integrated into the machinery of central planning, party and state institutions. Thus, it can be conclude that in both regimes the job of the legislature was passive and was a type of rubber-stamp or merely endorsing already made policy decisions. Since the 1990's, Ethiopia has transformed from a nearly failed state as a result of various brutal dictatorships, to one that has made progress through introducing radical political and structural changes. A new Constitution was adopted in 1995, establishing a Federal Democratic Republic. The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has brought about fundamental constitutional and political changes and has fundamentally influenced the policymaking process in Ethiopia. Since then, Ethiopia has conducted four elections held within a legal framework institutionalizing pluralism and democracy. These changes have, inter alia, necessitated the

formulation and implementation of economic and social policies that will give effect to the principles embodied in the new Constitution. The structure of government and the principles of policymaking entrenched in the Constitution, aimed at redressing the imbalances created by the past. Accordingly, Ethiopia is structured along the lines of bicameral parliament consisting of a Federal Council and a House of Peoples' Representatives where both a federal government and a state shall have legislative, executive and judicial powers (FDRE Constitution, 1995). The legislative organs are constitutionally declared to be the highest political authority and the law making power is vested on the same. Being one of the most important tasks of the parliament, policymaking is the chief device of elected bodies used to represent the needs and wishes of citizens through the policymaking process.

The contemporary Ethiopia, struggling for a century to establish constitutional state to realize democracy, needs institutions that are capable of formulating good laws/policies in both the political sense of getting agreement from participants, and in the technical sense of achieving the intended purposes. Recognizing this fact, unlike the previous regimes, both the government, national and international institutions were actively engaged to improve the institutional capacity of the Parliament.

Thus the primary focus of this study is to assess a broad sense of the present circumstance of Ethiopian legislatures (HoPRs), their role in the policy making process, their institutional capacity and potential to become an important actor in the policymaking process as defined by the law of land.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Most researchers conducted in public policy discipline focus on analyzing the link between goals, actions, and outcomes, and some on exploring the inputs in the making of public policy which may include the actors, resources and structures involved. The researcher believes that whilst it is important to address policy issues through all those ways, it is also relevant to explore the practice of the main policymaking institutions, which is the base for any policy decisions to take proactive measures. Accordingly, this research will concentrate on the policymaking practice and challenges, and institutional capacity of the legislature in Ethiopia, which is scanty in the research arena.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to assess the policymaking power, function and institutional capacity of the House of Peoples' Representative; and their link with other policy actors such as the executive, the public, civil society organizations, think-tank and research organization; and the institutional capacity of the existing legislature through an extensive review of literature and empirical evidences. Specifically the study set out:

1. To examine how well the legislature performs its policymaking function as it is stipulated in the constitution and in light of generally accepted policymaking theories, and principles.
2. To explain the extent of legislature effort to involve the public, civil society organizations, think-tank and research organizations in the policymaking process.
3. To evaluate capacity of the legislative infrastructure to deliver its policymaking function.
4. To identify factors that affects the policymaking role of the legislature.
5. To suggest possible strategies that would help the legislature to mitigate their challenges.

### **Research Questions**

In order to attain the objectives of the study, this research attempts to answer the following basic questions:

1. How well does the legislature perform its policymaking function as it is granted by the constitution, other laws and in light of certain policymaking theories and principles?
2. To what extent does the Ethiopian legislature involve the public, civil society organizations, think-tank and research organizations in the policymaking process?
3. How well do systems of legislative infrastructure help the legislature perform its functions in Ethiopia?
4. What factors affect the policymaking role of the Ethiopian legislature?

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Policy:** A definite course or method of action selected (by government, institution, group or individual) from among alternatives and in the light of given conditions to guide and, usually, to determine present and future decisions (Webster's dictionary).

**Public Policy:** is a statement by government on what it intends to do or not to do such as law, regulation, decision or order, or a combination of these that govern a particular issue areas or problem (Birkland, 2001:9).

**Legislature:** the term "legislature" and "parliament" are used "interchangeably as generic terms for the elected representative body." In the context of this study legislature refers the HoPRs

**Policy Process:** the policy processes can be placed in three groups, namely: Policy making processes (including formulation and legitimization), Policy implementation processes (also known as the executive process) and Policy analysis and evaluation processes (Cloete, 1994: 102).

**Policymaking:** Policymaking involves a series of interrelated phases in the process of making vital policy decisions involving: identifying policy problems, setting agenda for decision making, formulating policy proposals, legitimating policies by the action of a lawmaking body (legislature).

## Literature Review

This chapter provides the key concept and theories of public policy. The theories aim to clarify issues that are associated with public policymaking and the role of policymakers. The different forms of government are also described to attest where real policymaking power resides in each government systems. The conceptual issues concentrate upon the Parliamentary form of government and the role of major actors such as legislators and executives and their institutional infrastructure to affect the policy.

The 1931 Constitution, the first constitution gifted by emperor Haile Selassie is considered as a pioneer to institutionalize a government in Ethiopia. The Emperor established a parliament of two houses, the chamber of Senate or Upper House (*Yehig Mewesegna Mikirbet*) was to consist of members appointed by the emperor drawn from among the nobility where as the Chamber of Deputies or Lower House (*Yehig Memria Mikirbet*) are appointed by the nobility and local chiefs until such time as the people were considered ready to elect the members of chambers of deputies themselves (The 1931 Constitution, article 31 & 32). Although the Emperor appeared to be establishing a basis for the rule of law, the parliament was in fact powerless and merely a vehicle for the continued consolidation of his authority. The mastermind of this new arrangement, from Haile Selassie's perspective, was that it created the illusion of a modern parliamentary system while destroying the old power bases and further concentrating absolute power into his own hands (Alemante G. Selassie, 1992).

The next happening that brought somewhat a better pattern in Ethiopian parliament is the revised constitution of 1955. The constitution embodied significant changes such as the acknowledgment of separation of powers, the introduction of a popularly elected body with actual legislative ability. It appeared with a provision that members of the lower house should be elected by universal adult suffrage and has given the lower house a power base separate from the emperor. But the senate remained an appointed chamber with members still chosen from the nobility and other prominent persons for 6 year term by the emperor (Constitution, 1955). However, the legitimacy of the Emperor was still unquestioned by most. The emperor had unrestricted constitutional powers, extraordinarily exceeding the power of the legislature, including the power to declare war, appoint judges, dissolve parliament, negotiate as well as sign treaties. Moreover, the constitution invested a sovereignty of the empire in the emperor with the power to determine the organization powers and duties of all government departments and to appoint and dismiss government officials, the prime minister and all other ministers (Article, 26&27, 66).

After the dawn fall of Haile Selassie in 1974, the Derg suspended the 1955 constitution and dissolved the emperor parliament. However there had no any written constitution for thirteen years until 1987, it officially declared the establishment of Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) in place of the Imperial government. Towards 1977, the Derg introduced a congress, consisted of all surviving members of the Derg, the central committee composed of 32 members elected by the former and 16 standing committee members elected by the congress from the members of the central committee; and promulgated legislation that guides the policymaking process in the country (Meheret, 1997). Regarding the process of policymaking Shiferaw in Mulugeta (2005) stated that the legal department in the office of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers had to initiate laws; the draft laws were to be sent to the Legal Committee, whose members include the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Deputy Minister of Finance, and the Deputy Ministry of Mines and Energy, a representative from the National Planning Supreme Council, the Department Head of Legal Affairs in the Office of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and the Minister or Head of the Agency sponsoring the draft legislation would deliberate the spirit of the legislation, and send that to the PMAC via the Office of the Council of Ministers (CoM) for approval. Nevertheless he noted that there were exceptions to the established procedure, when draft laws were assigned to a group of experts particularly established to examine bills and asked to provide their opinion and recommendation; and in some other cases, legislation was referred to a joint Legal and Administrative Committee or to a joint Legal and Economic Committee, all of which are established by the Office of the Council of Ministers (ibid). After having studied and fused their insight, the draft legislation would be sent to the Provisional Administrative Council for final approval; and the proclamation was published in *Negarit Gazeta* by the name of PMAC.

In 1979, even though the same personality remained in the leadership positions, the virtual power of decision making over the years shifted from the PMAC to the Commission for Organizing the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE) which later transformed to Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) in 1984. According to Mulugeta (2005) after the establishment of the party, the Derg claimed that the single most important actor in the

socio-economic policymaking process was the party of the working people with its philosophy and ideology of Marxism and Leninism. Although much of the statutory declarations were often made in the name of Derg, since the end of the 1970, WPE, together with the principle of Marxism and Leninism assumed a virtual control over the entire socio economic policymaking process (ibid).

After promulgating the 1987 Constitution, the supreme organ of state power resides to the National Shengo (National Assembly) which had 835 members. Candidates to the National Shengo had to be nominated by regional branches of the WPE, mass organizations, military units, and other associations recognized by law and balloting for seats in the National Shengo was required to be secret. Elected members served five-year terms, and the body met in regular session once each year. The responsibility of National Shengo included: amending the constitution; determining foreign, defense, and security policy; establishing the boundaries, status, and accountability of administrative regions; and approving economic plans (PDRE, 1987). The other important organ in the policymaking practice was the Council of State. The Council of State had further authority to issue decrees in the pursuit of the duties stipulated by law or assigned by the National Shengo. Moreover it exercised the national legislative role when the National Shengo was not in session (Alemante, 1992). The 1987 constitution clearly stipulated that the party is the leading organ of the state as well as the society' (PDRE, 1987). Furthermore, in the wake of the establishment of PDRE, the newly emerging state organ, administrative and autonomous regions were integrated into the machinery of central planning, party and state institutions. Alemante (ibid) also noted that the party and the executive use the legislature to legitimize their action, but will keep the legislature distant from actual policymaking process.

After a long time struggle and downfall of the Derg regime in 1991, based on the Transitional Period Charter, the Transitional Parliament, namely, the Council of Representatives was formed as a supreme organ of power for the transition period. The incumbent Constitution, which was designated as the "Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia," was promulgated in August 1995, on which this study is based.

It was after a long period of political evolution and restructuring that Ethiopia came to abolish the system of unitary government and introduced the operating federal system. The Ethiopian Constitution, which was designated as the "Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia," was promulgated, and Ethiopia become a federal country in 1995. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution established a Federal Republic constituting nine autonomous states and two City administrations that are accountable to the federal government. The Constitution enumerates the powers of the two tiers of government i.e Federal and Regional, and defines the basic structure and organization of the federal and regional states (Article 50, 51&52). Each of the federal and members states exercise legislative, executive and judicial powers within their mandates and are autonomous (Article 58). Accordingly, all powers not given expressly to the federal government alone or concurrently exercised with the regional governments are given to regional government.

The Federal Parliament is bicameral, consisting of the Federal Council and the House of Peoples' Representatives. The House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR) is the highest authority of the Federal Government as the supreme organ in the country and retains legislature powers over all matters of federal jurisdictions. It is the institution which enjoys the decisional, control and representative powers of legislature. As stipulated in the Constitution (Article, 54) the maximum number of seats for elected representatives in the HoPR is 550, of which at least 20 are reserved for minority nationalities and peoples (Sub-article 3). The member of HoPR is elected from candidates in each electoral district (constituting a population of 100,000) by a plurality of the votes cast for five years. Members of the House of Peoples' Representatives as a whole and have the liberty to pay their allegiance to the constitution, the will of the people and their conscience (Sub article, 2&4). As is most likely the case around the world, Members of the Parliament (MPs) enjoy immunity from prosecution and will not be subject to any criminal and civil proceedings while attending to legislative duties unless caught in *flagrante delicto*. However, a member may lose his/her mandate of representation upon loss of confidence by the electorate (Sub-article, 6&7). The House of Peoples' Representative is central to this paper and thus its powers, functions and practice are dealt with in next sections.

The second parliament, the House of Federation (HoF), as provided under the Constitution Article (61), is composed of representatives of nations, nationalities and peoples of each nation. Every one of the nations, nationalities and people is represented by one member in the HoF, and those who have extra one million will have additional one member. Further, each state legislature or state council elects representatives to the HoF, or may opt to have the people elect their representative (Sub-article 2 & 3). The House of Federation holds a unique and extraordinary position. Unlike conventional federal systems, the HoF serves as the representative institution of nation nationalities in Ethiopia. It has essentially the same representation, but in the FDRE Constitution, this is formulated in a slightly different way: it is not composed of representatives of the federal units, but 'of representatives of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' (Article 61, 2). As Lars (2001) notes, because of the historical and philosophical reasons, that constitutions have adopted different mechanisms for reviewing the constitutionality of laws and decisions of government bodies. Therefore, uniquely, reviewing the



constitutionality of the laws and decisions of government is vested on HoF in Ethiopia. Currently HoF appointed 120 members representing 75 Nation Nationalities, and Peoples. Distinct from other federal countries, HoF is a non-legislative institute, and is responsible to reviewing the issues of constitutionality. The most important function of the House of Federation is the power to interpret the constitution (Article, 62). In Ethiopia, the umpiring of constitutional disputes is not a purely legal matter, as it does involve arriving at a political solution. Though it is the HoF that has the authority to decide on “all constitutional disputes,” it is supported by a council of constitutional inquiry (composed of 11 members: the chief Justice and the Vice Chief Justice of the Federal Supreme Court, and six legal experts who are nominated by the House) which is established by the constitution with the power to investigate constitutional disputes (Article, 84). The council is, however, required to submit its recommendations to the HoF if it finds it necessary to interpret the constitution.

The House of Federation is also empowered to order federal intervention if, in violation of the constitution, a member state endangers the constitutional order (Article 62, 9). Of course, this measure is to be taken if all efforts to stop the threat against the constitutional order are unsuccessful, so that the House is recognized as the ultimate defender of the constitutional compact of the peoples of Ethiopia. The House of Federation has other specific functions. For instance, it is mandated to determine the division of revenues from the joint federal and state tax sources and the amount of federal subsidies to be provided to the member states (Article 62,7).

The two Houses, HoPR and HoF differ from one another in their respective powers and functions except in those constitutionally-specified matters falling under their concurrent competence. For instance, both Houses are required in a joint session to take “appropriate measures when state authorities are unable to arrest violations of human rights within their jurisdiction” (Article, 55).

Likewise, the executive branch of the government is established by the FDRE Constitution and has constitutionally entrusted powers and functions. Pursuant to the Ethiopian Constitution, the political party or coalition of political parties that has the greatest number of seats in the House of Peoples’ Representatives assumes the power and take the lead of the government (Article 56 & 73 sub-article 2). This direct linkage makes the executive not only subservient to the House of Peoples’ Representatives but also its conduit through which the political programs of the majority party or a coalition of parties are implemented. Therefore, one can see a Westminster’s style executive government in the Ethiopian case.

The executive branch of government mainly comprises of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Council of Ministers along with a ‘ceremonial’ President. Although the election of the Prime Minister is often concluded at the party forums, he/she shall be elected from among members of the HoPRs. The Prime Minister must have the HoPRs approval his nominees for the Ministerial position, who, together with him, constitute the executive (Article 74, 2). Both are accountable to the House of Peoples’ Representatives; and in the exercise of State functions, members of the Council of Ministers are collectively responsible for all decision as per the Article 72(2). The executive presides over the entire implementation process of laws and socio-economic and foreign policies of the country.

The president, after nominated by HoPR, is elected by the joint session of the two Houses of the Ethiopian parliament by a two-third majority. Unlike the term of the two Houses, the term of the President is for six years and he/she can continue in office for another term. The constitutional design for the parliament and the president’s stay in office a year longer than the executive is to establish a continuity of government and linkage between the previous and the forthcoming terms (Fassil, 1997). The duties of the President include addressing the joint session of the parliament annually, appointing ambassadors, granting high military titles, and decorating high domestic and foreign dignitaries with medals and prizes (Article, 71). The role of the president in the policymaking process is limited to signing the bills into laws following their approval by the HoPR, although laws can still take effect within fifteen days with or without his signature (Article, 57).

The 1995 Constitution further establishes an independent judiciary both at the federal and state levels (Article, 78). The Ethiopian judiciary is composed of two parallel systems of federal and state courts, between which judicial authority is distributed and the federal judicial power lies in federal courts whereas state judicial power is attributed to state courts (Article, 78, Sub-article 2&3). The judicial powers, both at federal and state levels, are vested on the courts (Article, 89, 1); and courts are authorized to check whether acts of the executive are in line with the principal legislation issued by parliament, and whether the executive is acting within the framework of the law. Although the courts are free to decide over all justifiable cases including those in which constitutional rights of citizens stand tall, their position is vague with regard to the power to interpret the constitution as the ultimate interpretive power is explicitly given to the HoF. Hence, legal professionals Tsegaye (2004), however, argue that there are no judicial reviews of legislative acts for constitutionality, and no standard is distinctively articulated for determining what constitutes ‘judicial power’ in Ethiopia. Assefa (2007) further claimed that being composed of representative of nationalities indirectly elected by the electorate at regional level, seems to consider the HoF as a political organ than judicial one.

In general, the FDRE governance system is basically parliamentary, and comprises the federal

government and state members, both with legislative, executive and judicial powers. The power of the government is established where the political party or parties with the greatest number of seats in the HoPR shall form the executive and lead it. The legislative organs are constitutionally declared to be the highest political authority, empowered with the most important function, law/policymaking.

To summarize, this chapter assesses and explores various theoretical perspectives on systems of government and public policymaking process. It has set the background information on the meaning/concept of public policy, the theories, the actors and their powers in different typologies of public policymaking process. Public policymaking theories are used to simplify our thinking about public policy and to channel our efforts to understand public policy by way of distinguishing between what is important and not important.

Moreover the characteristics of the two prominent forms of government presidential and parliamentary; separation of power and the relationship between different branches of government in both forms of government; are also included to investigate the practice in which public policy are made in the existing Ethiopian parliament. The basic control is vested to the three branches of a government, in three separate and independent institutions, the legislature, the executive and the courts, with the personnel of each being independent to each other. Scholars noted that not all government powers can neatly slotted in to just one of these categories as the pure doctrine assumes to be the case. The inadequacy of this classification has become more obvious in recent times particularly in parliamentary countries in relation to at least two areas of government activity: legislation and policy making. Both these processes occur in all three branches of government and how they fit in to the doctrine of separation of powers is still being resolved.

Furthermore the chapter discussed the link of legislatures with citizens and civil society organization and found that legislatures should involve citizens and civil society organizations to a say to policies affecting their community using different mechanisms. Policy makers are in charge of developing policies in such a way that the outcome of which can bring a real benefit to the society. All these can happen when nationals have the right to participate in national development and in particular to be consulted with respect to policies or laws affecting them. With weak participation of the citizen, policies will lose the ownership of citizen which is a crucial element to their effective implementation.

Moreover discussions are also made on the legal and institutional preconditions of legislature for public policy formulation based on the experience of different parliamentary countries. Number of house, constitutional power, capacity of legislature, legislative organizations, and political space and political will are identified as a fundamental structure and institutional factors that obstruct or enhance the effort of legislature in its policymaking functions. Different experience revealed that, in the absence of professionally advanced and qualified support staff, independent policy thinks-thank and policy advocacy institutions, it will be difficult for the legislature to professionalize policies.

### **Research Design and Methodology of The Study**

This chapter describes the methods by which the questions raised within the study analyzed. The research design, source of data, population, sampling, data instruments and data analysis method are explained here under.

#### **Research Design**

This research employed descriptive and analytical research methods to describe, in detail, a situation or set of circumstances of the current status of the legislature and their policymaking role; to describe "what exists" and the status quo with respect to variables of the policymaking process and institutional capacity of legislature in contemporary Ethiopia. This research is largely qualitative, which is appropriate to collect subjective opinion from members of legislature, members of standing committee and administrative staff of the house about their roles, power, practice and challenges that they are exercising in the policy making process. However to a lesser extent, the quantitative method was also applied to obtain the preliminary information and demographic characteristics of the sample population. Because of the dominant qualitative nature of the study, the research is relied on open-ended questionnaire in depth interviews, observation and document review. Finally, empirical evidences collected through questionnaire, interview and document review are organized by respondents, analyzed and summarized.

#### **Population**

Since the study intended to explore the practice and challenges of legislative organ, members of the parliament, members of the standing committees and the administrative staff of the House of Representatives were the population of the study from which the sample drawn. Moreover some key informants involved in the policymaking systems such as civil society leaders, government officials, academics were included to get incisive information.

### Sampling Technique

For the reason that is because the research focuses on the practice and challenges of the legislature in policymaking process, both probability and a non-probability sampling technique were employed. From probability sampling simple random sampling is applied to draw a sample from all members of parliament except the opposition representative. Moreover, purposive sampling method is used to include the opposition MP and to gather incisive information from, chairman and secretary of the standing committees, administrative staff, and from the key informants such as from Civil Society Organization, Prime Minister Office, former parliament members and Academics (on policy studies, federalism and law).

### Sample Size

The main respondents of the research were members of the House of Peoples Representative (HoPRs). From the members of HoPRs, 88 (12%) have been selected including eight members of parliament from Allied Parties to the EPRDF, one from opposition parties, 20 respondents from chair persons and secretary of the standing committees. Of the respondents of MPs' 20(22.7%) were women MPs'. Moreover six administrative staff of the HoPR was selected from the legal drafting, research and oversight support directorate. Finally, two experts from PMO, five from Ethiopian academics, six from civil society organization and two former MPs were selected as respondents whose information is used to substantiate the data obtained from the members of HoPR. Table 3 shows the sampling frame and size of the study.

Table 3: Distribution of Sample Respondents

Sampling Frame	Total Population			Sample size in No		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
Members of Parliament excluding Members from opposition parties, chairman and secretary of the standing committee	146	324	470	16	42	58
Member of Opposition Party	-	1	1	-	1	1
Members of parliament from Allied Parties to the EPRDF	3	40	43	2	6	8
Chairman and secretary of the standing committees	3	29	32	2	18	20
Total Members of Parliament	152	395	547	20	68	87
House of Peoples Representative Administrative staff (legal drafting, research and oversight professional support staff)	-	-	-	-	6	6
Key informants from House of Federation, Prime Minister Office, Civil Society Organizations, Former Members of Parliament and Academics	-	-	-	-	15	15
<b>Total</b>						<b>108</b>

### Sources of Data

- **Primary Data Source:** Since the research concentrated mainly on the policymaking role of legislature from agenda setting to policy adoption stage of the policymaking process, it has used primary sources of data, questionnaire and interview to gather the opinion and insight of the selected respondents on their role.
- **Secondary Data Source:** In addition to primary sources, secondary data were collected to substantiate interview and questionnaire responses, the researcher has made a detailed and an extensive review of past documents. The proclamations and regulations have been collected and examined to explore the power vested on the legislative body, the procedures and systems established for policymaking process, and to relate past and current policymaking practices of legislative institutions.

### Data Collection Instruments

1. **Questionnaire:** Four questionnaires that comprise both open and closed-ended questions were prepared and distributed to the members of parliament, members of standing committee, administrative staff of the House and key informants to collect more facts and detail opinions of the respondents. The questionnaire distributed to members of parliament has five parts. In the first part respondents were asked to complete personal information. The second part focuses on the organization and procedures and rules of parliament. The third part contains questions that are devoted to ask respondents on their power, role and practice in the policy initiation, formulation and legitimating process. The fourth part deals with the relationship of legislature with different policy actors, while the fifth part focuses on the institutional capacity of legislature. Similarly, the questionnaire distributed for standing committee members consist the above

type of questions in addition to questions based on their role provided by the procedure of the House such as initiating, drafting legislations, and organizing public hearings. The other questionnaire filled by the administrative staff of the House center on their support to the legislature in policymaking process and their insight on the policymaking practice of the parliament. Finally the questionnaire distributed to the key informants stresses on the system of government, their insight on the role and practice of the existing parliament and, the participation of the people, civil society organizations, think-tank groups, and research institute, in the policymaking process. Amharic language is used to collect questionnaire responses particularly from the MPs', members of standing committees and administrative staff of the House.

2. **Interview:** Interviews (both structure and unstructured) were conducted with the two Chairpersons of standing committee's in the HoPRs. Interviews are used specially to triangulate the information obtained through the questionnaires and to gather detailed information on legislature relationship with other policy actors, on their powers, roles, capacity as well as actual practices during the policymaking process. Interviews were tape-recorded, this provided the researcher with opportunity to go through the tapes and transcribe them for careful analysis.
3. **Observation:** Moreover observations were conducted to survey some of the deliberations of public hearings on draft legislation.

### Method of Data Analysis

The questionnaire was randomly distributed based on the sample size and in total 108 MPs responded to the questionnaire. The analysis made based on the information and empirical evidences collected through questionnaire, interviews and document review. Because of the qualitative nature of the study, thematic analyses were used dominantly in the discussions based on the information obtained from open ended questions, interviews and reviewed documents and attempts were made to include the views of different groups.

### Data Presentation, Discussion and Analysis

This chapter puts forward the presentation, discussion and analysis of the data/information secured from respondents and document reviewed. Questionnaire and interview responses from Members of the Parliament, (Ruling party-EPRDF MPs, EPRDF allied party MPs', Opposition MP), chairman and secretary of standing committee, and from key informants (civil society organizations leader, Prime Minister Office experts, former parliament members and academics) are used as sources for data presentation, discussion and analysis. Table 4 below shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The FDRE Constitution, the House of Peoples' Representatives of the FDRE Rules of Procedures and Members' Code of Conduct Regulation No. 3/2006 and the minutes of lawmaking and public hearing session of HoPRs on draft Proclamations and other documents were reviewed for analysis.

Table: 4 Characteristics of the Respondents

Respondents	No. of Respondents			Qualification					Party Represented		
	Sex		Total								
	M	F									
				PHD	MSC/MA	BSC/BA	Dip loma	EPRDF	EPRDF Allied Parties	Opposition	
Members of Parliament	68	20	88	-	38	28	22	79	8	1	
HoPRs Administrative Staff	6	-	6	-	4	2	-	-	-	-	
Key informants from, Prime Minister's Office, CSO, Former Members of Parliament and Academics	14	1	15	4	9	2	-	-	-	-	
Total	88	21	109	5	51	31	22	79	8	1	

Source: Survey data

Questionnaires were designed and distributed to MPs', standing committees', administrative staff of the House and key informants. Out of the total 115 questionnaires distributed, 109 respondents filled and returned. From the entire respondents 88(81%) were male and 21(19%) were female. Concerning their party representation, the profile of the respondents include: 79 from ruling party MPs', 8 from Allied Parties to the EPRDF, and one from opposition parties. Moreover, 20 chair persons and secretaries of the standing committees, six administrative staff of the HoPR and 15 key informants (2 from PMO, 8 from Ethiopian academics, 6 from civil society organizations, and 2 former MPs) were also included. The educational profile of respondents shows: 4 (4%) PhD holders, 51 (47%) Masters, 31 (28%) Bachelor, and the remaining 21 (20%) are Diploma holder.



### **The Law/Polymaking Power, Role and Function of the HoPR**

Modern democracies are characterized by shared decision-making between the legislative and executive branches. Most policy initiatives are enacted into law, and thus must be approved by the legislature. It becomes very important then to identify what exactly the contribution of the legislature is to the overall policy-making process; to assess how well does the legislature performs its policymaking function granted to it by the constitution, other laws and in light of certain policymaking theories and principles.

### **The Law/Polymaking Power of the HoPR**

The FDRE Constitution, the HoPR Rules of Procedures and Members' Code of Conduct Regulation No. 3/2006 and the minutes of public hearing sessions of HoPR on the draft Proclamations and several comments (as described below) have been gathered through interview and questionnaire responses to assess the policy making role of the legislature in Ethiopia. In modern democracy, the powers and functions of the three organs of the government are identified and enumerated in the Constitution and other legislations. This is important to determine the power limit of the government organs to hold them accountable and to make them liable based on the scope of their authority.

Based on the FDRE Constitution Article (53), Ethiopia follows a bicameral Parliamentary system of government that has two federal houses called the Lower House- 'House of Peoples' Representatives' and the Upper House- 'House of the Federation'. Bicameralism is the practice of having two legislative or parliamentary chambers. However, the relationship between the two chambers of a bicameral legislature can vary from country to country. In most parliamentary countries, the power of the legislative is vested to both houses. The constitutions grant both Parliaments the power to introduce legislation directly and to enact new legislation while in others legislators can only consider proposals originated in the executive.

In this regard, the constitution of Ethiopia has vested full power of legislation on the lower house, HoPR. As enshrined in the FDRE Constitution Article (55 & 93), the house is vested with the power to legislate and enact laws. Legislation is, therefore, to prescribe rules and power of execution and the executive is subordinate and accountable to the Legislature. As the body that represents the people, HoPR is called upon to see to it that the administration of public policy reflects and meets the people's needs.

Unlike other bicameral countries, the role of the Upper House-HoF in the lawmaking process is limited to such specific matters as amending the constitution, and initiating draft civil laws, (it merely identifies, but not legislate civil matters) to be enacted by the HoPR (Article 62,8). The House of Federation was meant to be a counter-majoritarian institution to balance against the majoritarianism in the HoPR and to protect minorities that could be left defenseless in the face of infant democracy. However, it is criticized that it barely could serve as a protection since the law-making function is not vested to the House and its composition replicates the situation in the HoPR that the numerically dominant ethnic groups, which dominate HoPR dominate the HoF as well (Tsegaye, 2004). Therefore, this arrangement distinguishes Ethiopia from most bicameral parliamentary countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and South Africa, which grant the Upper House the power of law/policymaking and approval. For instance, the Canadian Senate enjoys the power of legislation in much the same manner as the House of Lords in UK and the Council of Province of the South African Parliament.

Some academics also commented that this arrangement has an impact on the policymaking process because the states will be left without option, which means that, unlike those federal countries, such as for instance, Germany whose Landers are directly involved in the law making process so that the Landers could override the decision of the lower house by exercising Veto or suspension power; the states in Ethiopia lacked this quality as they are not represented in the upper house; and the House itself has almost little law making power. Hence, if bicameralism is measured in terms of the law-making power of the Houses, some researchers tend to argue that Ethiopia has a de facto unicameral parliament as the upper house which represents diversities is denied the power to make laws (Legese, 2012).

Although it is subject to argument that having a bicameral legislature makes meaningful political reforms more difficult to achieve, and increases the risk of deadlock (particularly in cases when both chambers have equal powers), most political analysts agree strongly for the merits of the checks and balances that are provided by the bicameral model (Rogers, 2001). In the case of Ethiopia, most of key informants who are academia agreed that, although the HoF assumes significant political power, lack of policymaking power is an impediment for the constituent units to exercise shared rule at the federal level.

Although the HOF is given the most important power to interpret the FDRE Constitution, as a structure, bicameralism in Ethiopia has no contribution to yield better policy by providing more information to policy makers and checking the tendency to mould legislation in line with popular pressures; and to prevent ill-considered legislation from being passed into law.

The constitution of Ethiopia also grants the power to enact new laws/policies to the executive by decree. Apart from the power of executing and implementing policies the Council of Minister and his Cabinet is offered the power of formulating economic, social and development policies and strategies as well as foreign policies

(Article 77:6). The council is also responsible to submit a draft law to the HoPR on any matters falling within its competence (Article 77:11).

Apart from this, as per the provisions of the Constitution Article 55 (1) and 59(2), which empower the HoPR to make its own rules of procedure and law making procedure, the House enacted Regulation No.3/2006, the Working Procedure and Members Code of Conduct Regulation. This Regulation was enacted because it is important to enable the HoPR to effectively discharge its powers and functions as well as the responsibility vested with by the public as enshrined in the Constitution, and to organize the working mechanisms and structures of the standing and *ad hoc* committees of the House.

The HoPR Rules of Procedures and Members' Code of Conduct Regulation Article (49) grants the House the power of legislating new laws, amending or repealing existing laws, ratifying international agreements and approval of laws/policies initiated by the executive and passing resolution. The regulation also sets out the principles, procedures, processes and practices involved in making acts of Parliament, from inception to completion to exercise the powers and duties vested in it by the Constitution; and to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it by the peoples of Ethiopia.

Thus, pursuant to article 50(1), initiating laws shall be mainly the duty of the government. Notwithstanding article 50(1), the regulation also stipulated power to initiate draft law for members of the house, Committee, Parliament Groups, and other bodies authorized by law where as the power of initiating finance draft laws is vested only on the government.

Moreover, a proclamation to provide for definitions of powers and duties of the executive organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Proclamation No. 691/2010 (Article 10:1) empowered each ministry to initiate or formulate laws and policies. Apart from this Proclamations enacted by the Parliament on a particular area of interest usually contains provision which delegates the executive to enact law by clearly stipulating that the Council of Ministers may issue regulations necessary for the proper implementation of the Proclamation.

Presumably in most parliamentary countries, the constitutions of Ethiopia and other statutory rules permit parliaments to delegate the legislative powers to the executive bodies. In Countries like Great Britain according to the principle of the parliamentary sovereignty all legislative powers are concentrated in the parliament but the executive bodies may adopt laws only on the basis of the powers delegated by the parliament (Kumarasingham, 2012). Nonetheless both cases reveal that in most parliamentary governments constitutional and statutory provisions have clearly strengthen the leverage of the executive, and policymaking functions tend to be concentrated in ministerial bureaucracy or parties. This is what Franchino (2008) describe that parliaments involve the delegation of considerable discretion to ministers who are in charge of administering existing policies and drafting new legislation within their jurisdiction. Therefore, executive bodies in Ethiopia are generally authorized to be the main body to initiate the policy proposals. This depicts that even though MPs' are entitled to introduce legislation, conversely the enormous authority given to the executive to introduce and influence the course of legislation is likely to dominate their autonomous. So the issue at stake and of vital importance to be studied is how far and with what effects has this arrangement affected the legislatures and policymaking process?

### **The Structure of the Committees in HoPR**

The General organizational set-up of the HoPR comprises the general assembly of the house, office of the speaker, various committees, secretariat of the house; sergeant-at-arms of the house, and party whips (parliamentary-group). The major structure that the House uses in performing its law making and oversight function is through establishments of committees in the parliament. Likely, in many other countries, parliamentary committees in HoPRs take the lion's share in assisting the parliament to conduct its law/policymaking and oversight functions. As per the provision of the Constitution Article 55 (19), the HoPRs established different standing and *ad hoc* committee structures (Regulation No.3/2006, Article 135). These are: the House's Business Advisory Committee, the Coordinating Committee, Standing Committees, Sub-Committees, and ad hoc Committees, friendship committees and Party Whips.

Similar to most legislative bodies, the Standing Committees in HoPR are the workhorses and the key clearance points at which decisions are taken at each stage of the legislative process. The HoPRs had sixteen standing committees, and each Standing Committee shall have up to 20 members. The members of each Standing Committee, including the chairperson and the deputy chairperson are assigned based upon the recommendation of the Speaker and elected by the House from among members; and no person may be a member of more than one Standing Committee (Article, 149). Therefore the sixteen standing committees constitute 320 of the 547 MPs'. As is most countries these committees mirror the government administrative structure.

Pursuant to the regulation, (Article 150) the Standing Committees' are charged with legislative duties and oversight functions over the executive ministries and government institutions to follow up the implementation on national socio-economic policies and strategies. They are responsible to submit reports and

proposals after examining draft laws referred to them; to follow up and supervise Government bodies; to initiate laws; to present their suggestion; to examine witnesses and documents; to undertake studies relating to the objective for which they are organized; and to prepare various seminars and fora; to exchange ideas acquired through experiences.

Members of Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) run all committees and their leadership, except for the public accounts which is run by an opposition party member and Pastoralists' Affairs standing committee, whose members are largely drawn from the EPRDF allied parties and which are particularly primed for emerging regions such as Somalia, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Afar. Besides, member of private contender is also authorized as Deputy Chairperson of the Science and Technology Standing Committee.

Likely in Westminster parliament's, the trend in Ethiopia shows of course, that the chair of the Public Account Committee is from the oppositions so as to increase the accountability on the utilization of resources and government expenditure. The House also established sub-committees upon the request of the Standing Committee to undertake activities it has been unable to accomplish owing to the heavy workload. The Standing Sub-Committees shall be accountable to the pertinent Standing Committees and shall receive directions and activities to be carried out in consultation with the Standing Committees, prepare work plans, and submit a report and recommendation to the Standing Committee.

### **The Law/Polymaking Process and the Role and Function of the HoPR**

By virtue of the principle of separation of powers, the body that is entrusted with the law making power at the federal level is the HoPRs. Apparently in most countries, members of the parliament and the committees in the parliament in Ethiopia are entitled to introduce legislation. Besides, the Constitution as well as the Regulation of the procedure of HoPR No. 3/2006 (Article 50, 1-7) stipulated, initiating laws is mainly the duty of the Government. According to the regulation article 50 (4&5), MPs could present a bill on any issue to the House provided that they secure endorsement signatures of members; while a bill initiated by the committee shall be presented signed by the committee chairperson. A bill initiated by the parliament group should be presented to the Speaker in writing signed by the party whip where as the bills initiated by other organs should be signed by the head of the institution and introduced to HoPR via the speaker 50 (6&7). Elaborating on the procedures article 50 (8), a draft law to be initiated by anybody shall comprise the importance of the draft law, detailed contents of the draft law, a document explaining the impact which the draft law will have on the government budget if it becomes law, and Amharic and English copies of the draft law should be presented submitted to the House of Speaker. However, in most cases the draft is introduced by the Council of Ministers (CoM). Every bill introduced in the house, they then go through a number of stages, first reading, second reading, and third reading before being passed for presidential assent. Therefore, the following note explains the process by which legislation is passed by HoPR.

#### **A) The Law/policymaking Process**

The following note, describes the law making processes followed when the executive initiate and presented the draft law to the House. Before describing the process of legislation that is intended to be carried out by the house, it is imperative to show the process, how laws/policies are initiated and drafted by the executive. The draft law initiated by the government should pass through the procedures and modalities spelled out by the Council of Minister (CoMs, 2005). Each ministry requests with a written letter to the CoMs for the specific legislation that the ministry tends to propose, and the request will be incorporated into the legislative program in the fiscal year. The CoMs forwards this to the president of the Country; the president of the Country incorporates it in the annual opening speech of the two Houses along with the purpose, to aware the HoPRs in which issues the CoMs is going to produce and submit the bill. By the year the line Ministry prepares the draft policy with stake holders; different governmental bodies and expertise invited to enrich the policy; and all the minutes of the meeting reduced in the report form. Then, after the line Ministry sends the draft which it feels final to the CoM. The policy unit at CoM scrutinizes the draft policy and refers the matter to standing committee of the CoM for further scrutiny, following a first reading of the legislation under consideration. If the Standing Committee of the CoM agrees with the policy it refers the policy to CoMs for approval, if not; the cabinet affairs minister presents it to the next CoMs plenary session; and CoMs deliberates on the policy. At all stages of the clearance points that the draft legislation passes through, each (i.e. the ministry initiating the law, the legal Affairs Advisory Group, the relevant standing committee that the law is referred to, and the CoMs) should make sure that the bill does not conflict with the constitution, other laws and the international laws that the country has ratified (ibid). The plenary session of the CoMs decides whether a draft bill should be sent to HoPRs or not. If CoMs is dissatisfied with the Policy it returns the policy to the line Ministry to incorporate the issues it feels sound. But if is satisfied, it forwards to the parliament. Receiving a draft bill, the Speaker of the HoPR presents the general content and spirit of the bill, and the draft law shall pass through the three stages of reading to promulgate. The following note, therefore, describes the law making processes followed when the Speaker of the House presents the draft law to the House according to the regulation No. 3/2006.

### **First Reading**

During the first stage of reading (Article, 52) the body that initiated the draft law presented in the agenda shall first give a brief explanation as to the content and purpose the draft law. The copies of the draft law shall be distributed to the members 48 hours before the session where as in case of emergency the draft shall be presented to the House by reading it. After a general debate on the content and purpose of the draft law where the speaker is of the opinion that sufficient debate has been conducted or a motion moved is approved to that effect, the draft law shall be given a number and referred to the respective committee. Where matters that should be considered jointly happen, it shall be indicated which committee shall play the leading and coordinating role. The Standing Committee that the draft bill is referred should contacts the drafters, consults them and organizes public hearings to elicit public opinions'. After consultations with the public and the executive, the committee designs the law for the second reading. With the exception that where a motion asking the House to pass to the second reading without referring the matter to a committee (committees), gets approval, the House may directly pass to the second reading and give the necessary decision after deliberation (Article, 52).

### **Second Reading**

In the second stage of reading (Article, 53) the draft law shall be deliberated upon in detail. The report and recommendation on the draft law prepared by the committee or committees concerned has presented to the House, and the draft law shall be deliberated upon in detail on the basis of the report and recommendation. In accordance with this Regulation an amendment motion may be introduced on the draft law report or recommendation presented. Where the amendment motion submitted receives approval, and where the House considers further investigation is required, the draft law may be referred back to the committee or (committees) for reconsideration. After the discussion, if the House is of the opinion that sufficient deliberation on the draft law has been conducted or not, shall be decided by voting (Article 53). If the session fails to achieve complete deliberations on the draft, the draft law shall be referred back to the committee for reconsideration. Finally, the committee shall submit to the House its final report and recommendation for a third reading which brings the legislative process to end.

### **Third Reading**

During the third stage of reading (Article, 54), the committee (committees) to which the draft law has been referred back for reconsideration, shall submit to the House its final report and recommendation. After conducting sufficient deliberation on the report and recommendation, the House shall pass its decision. According to the regulation, unless the House believes in the urgency of the matter, a committee to which a draft law has been referred to shall be allowed at least 20 working days for considering and presenting its recommendation. Notwithstanding this provision, the Speaker, taking into consideration the extent and complexity of the draft law, may allow the committee additional time (article, 56).

### **Adoption of laws**

Lastly the House shall approve the draft law article by article; and shall vote upon the draft law as a whole to pass it as a law and passed by a majority vote in accordance with Article 59(1) of the constitution, except some decisions such as amending the constitution, approving the state of emergency declared by the government, amend the fundamental rights and freedoms that requires two third majority. Following the decision of HoPR to enact a law by a majority, it is submitted to the president for signature (Article 57). Unlike most federal countries the bill will not be sent to the House of Federation before adoption. The President shall sign a law submitted to him within fifteen days. The President's power of signing with respect to the legislative process could prolong the official adoption of legislation only for fifteen days from the day of submission; nevertheless, after that, the law takes effect with or without his signature (ibid). The overall process of the policymaking shows that the legislative process starts rolling from the premises of the executive; and must be concluded with the seal of approval in the parliament. Presumably, a draft law presented by the members of the House or committee also follows the above process of the three readings.

### **b) Law/Policymaking Role and Function of the HoPR**

As described above, the members of the house as well as Standing Committees are empowered to initiate laws; to examine witnesses and documents; to submit reports and proposals after examining draft laws referred to them and to present their suggestion. The Standing committees are autonomous not only that all referred legislation should be considered by the referral committee, but they are also required to present their consideration in report to the floor.

Unless the law that needs to be in effect is urgent as it is stipulated in the constitution article 77(10), any draft bills proposed and submitted to the house is subject to referral. The index of laws that are previously approved shows that except some loan agreements that are conducted with different countries, all bills are referred to the respective standing committees for consideration after the first reading are held by the house. If the bill requires multiple committees it will be under scrutiny at a joint Sitting of different Standing Committees; and the debate will be conducted by the Chairperson of the Standing Committee that co-ordinates the case (Regulation No. 3/2006, Article 152).



The committee is required to debate with source persons on the draft law, to set up public forums and gather the opinion thereof, to cause the stakeholders concerned to give their opinion on the draft law, to cause invited guests to be called, according to the circumstances (Article 153). Based on the procedure, the standing committees in HoPR first review the document and conduct an overall research with the technical expertise support in the respective legal research teams before inviting the source persons and debate on the draft bill. After having the debate in technical hearing with the source persons, the committees publicize their sitting programs to the public using Ethiopian radio, and television, according to the circumstances. They also write a letter attached with the document for relevant organizations before ten days and are holding public hearings on legislation referred to them.

They also facilitate a means by which those who have not been able to attend the sitting bodies and individuals can give their opinion on the agendas. More importantly the committees must be able to collect independent information about issues and topics related to the legislation before them. Any member has the right to attend any sitting prepared by a Standing Committee without the right to vote.

However, all the bills may not be subject to public hearings, whether they require the public hearing or not is decided by a committee. The procedure also allows the Standing Committee to influence the legislation content; it allows returning the draft to the body concerned in order to correct and sending it back to the committee if the committee is of the opinion that the draft law referred to it has a fundamental problem, after informing the speaker about the case (Article 153, 9). The procedure gives the committee a range of options in shaping legislation such as: amendment, rejection, referral back to executive branch. Moreover, the committee's position is protected by the floor in the final reading. This attests that the legislatures have the legal ground to play a significant role in scrutinizing whether the laws/policies are proposed on the benefit of the people before they gets an approval.

Indeed, the constitution as well as the procedure of HoPR has given significant power of law/policymaking to members, and committees of HoPR. Members of parliament and the standing committees also clearly explained through the questionnaires that they are well aware of their power and the procedures to initiate the law, and there is no any procedural hindrance to discharge their responsibility of initiating the law. However, they noted their involvement in proposing the law/policy agenda is negligible, while they ranked the executive and ruling party first interchangeably. All of the responses of the MPs explicate that the reason they holdup to initiate law is, for one thing, they understand that the task of the legislature is to promulgate the policies proposed by the executive and to oversee their implementation; they rather mull over themselves only to approve detailed legislation/proclamation than as formulators. Secondly, they believe the ability of the MPs' is not as such competent compared with the executive to propose well-informed policy ideas. Moreover, they strongly believe that the executive shall provide legal support or complement the loophole in the law through legislation since it has an access to identify where the issue that needs policy emanates from during implementation. Besides, the opposition MP mentioned that the precondition seated by the regulation of HoPRs 'A draft law initiated by members of the parliament shall be presented to the speaker in writing signed by at least twenty members' prevents opposition political parties to initiate alternative policy proposals. According to him, the ruling party enjoys an absolute power in the process of policy making that involves both agenda setting and designing policy proposal.

The chair person at the standing committee with different rationalization, strongly believes that as far as the government is constructed from the ruling party that has got the largest number of seats in the parliament, and once the policies and strategies of the ruling party has got the acceptance of the public through election, the responsibility of initiating the laws should rely on the shoulder of the government. According to him the legislature is mostly responsible to review and approve the policies on behalf of the public in the policymaking process. Consequently, the draft law initiated by the executive scrutinized and reviewed based on the inputs as a desired level before promulgation, said the chair person. However some professional's claim that the Ethiopian parliament is used to rubberstamp the laws, he noted, this is not only the case of Ethiopia rather the reality of all parliamentary countries.

The academicians on their part argued that having the power by decree with its strategic position of resources and the competence towards policymaking, the executive secured much authority to introduce and influence the course of legislation. They also claim that the ruling party is not successful in representing itself with best parliamentarians as much as it reserves its best members in the executive branch; it lacks competent candidates that can ensure its supremacy over the executive. Moreover, they noted that except some attempts made by the opposition and private MPs contenders, to identify gaps in the legislation and in some cases have boycotted Parliament in protest at the passage of a particular piece of legislation, most legislative proposals are approved smoothly. Therefore, such circumstance makes the HoPRs to be perceived as an institution that simply endorses the initiation from the executive. Table 5 below shows the law/policymaking trend of HoPR.

Table 5: The law/policymaking trend of HoPRs

Year	Bills proposed/initiated by the legislature		Bills proposed /initiated by the executive		Bills approved by the legislature	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
1 <sup>st</sup> term 1995/96-2000	8	3.6%	209	96.3%	217	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup> term 2000/01-2005	3	1.2%	251	98.8%	254	100%
3 <sup>rd</sup> term 2006-2010	2	0.9%	222	99.1%	224	100%
4 <sup>th</sup> term 2011-March, 2013	-	0	84	98.8%	84	100%
Total	13	1.6%	766	98.3%	779	100%

Source: Compiled by the researcher from the minutes and archives in the HoPR

As it is shown in the above table, the trend of the law/policymaking is entirely dominated by the executive branch, while the HoPR is playing the role of arbiters and approval of policy. The reviewed documents testify that up until March 2013, the executive proposed 766 (98.3%) bills while the office of the House Speaker proposed the remaining 13 (1.6%) bills. In the four terms of the Ethiopian Parliament there are only two laws (proclamation of National Anthem (673/2010) and the proclamation of national flag (651/2010) that are initiated by information and culture affairs standing committee. Despite the fact that the executive sent a preponderant number of the bills, the success rate of the bills initiated by the Executive is high. All the proposed bills have been approved.

Both the data gathered from the documents and through the questionnaires revealed that almost all the laws/policies passed by Parliament have originated from the Executive; the legislatures were engaged in reviewing and approving legislation. This situation depicts that though the Constitution has given the far reaching powers of law making and mandates to the HoPRs, as it is described by Robert & John (1999) strong formal powers do not guarantee an influential legislature; formal powers mean little if a legislature lacks the capacity to use them. This can be seen as justified by Howlett and Ramesh (2003) that in parliamentary systems where the legislators belonging to the governing party and where the membership is tightly organized along party lines, and marked by a high degree of cohesion and discipline, permit little opportunity for legislators to take an independent stand.

More importantly, all respondents from MPs' stated that beside the executive branch, the party ideology and its leadership has played an important role in public policymaking as much rests on constitutional guarantees as on the majority seats in the parliament shall form the executive and lead it (Article 56). Therefore the MPs firmly expressed that the party and the executive is acting accordingly and there is no wrong in this exercise as long as people at various levels are involved in the formulation of policies and plans in an organized manner and as long as the trend has no negative impact. Moreover, some MPs' are justifying that in countries such as Ethiopia, where democracy is at its infant stage, where citizens and civil society organizations are not vibrant, and where pluralistic political culture and opposition parties are not strong, the system is likely to promote the exclusive power of the executive and party leadership.

Despite the aforementioned justification raised by MPs,' the academicians, and former MPs' justify through the questionnaires that from the constitutional point of view, there is an ample opportunity for the legislature to disclose their responsibilities as it is a venture for realizing policy legitimacy. However, in practice the dominance of the executive/ruling party is narrowing the political space obstructing each organ of the government to function well and is simply a monopoly in contradiction with the separation of power that stipulates check and balance. According to them, the power of the legislature to override the draft policy negotiated by the executive, shows in practice the former loss of its power as there is fusion of power between the executive and legislature. Even if the option is minimal, in the situation where a single party occupies over 98% of the seats in the Parliament, in a situation where Ethiopia lacks the oppositions (to put as they explained, the 'unpaid researchers' for the government in power, and individual MPs' are not competent to counter-balance and challenge the policy ideas proposed by the executive. They strongly remarked that the policymaking process lacks wide spread policy deliberation. Hence, the dominant party controls over the political process, there is a high possibility for it to be passed for a draft law once negotiated by the executive.

The chair person of the standing committee also stated that capable and loyal opposition parties (in his expression loyal to the constitution and to the public) have a significant contribution especially to raise alternative policy ideas and to make the executive attentive to self correct. However, lacking such type of opposition parties in parliament is not by far better than one party dominated parliament. Comparing the third term of the parliament with the existing one, he remarked that however the oppositions are absent in the existing parliament, its capacity is in a better position than the third term on which opposition were more.

An opposition MP on his part noted:

*The Constitution has been plainly stipulated the application of balance of power between the three wings of the government. However, in Ethiopia where almost all the executives are members of the*

*ruling party and members of the parliament; and where party and the government are not clearly separated; there is a favorable ground to the executive through the majority seat to legislate whatever it wants. The Parliament lacks a pluralistic approach; neither the alternative ideas presented by opposition are accepted nor members of ruling party challenged the issues proposed by the ruling party. The loyalty of the ruling party members goes even to the extent of believing that challenging the government in parliament is counted as to the breach of party discipline, and to the extent of being committed to give priority to party concerns than addressing the problems of the people who elect them. As such, no challenge comes from MPs, and as a result of which the leading executive encounters no obstacle in having ratified whatever draft laws it submits to the House (translated by the researcher).*

He also stated that unless fair election is carried out, and the government let itself free from political corruption, multi-party system enriched and the participation of parties in the assembly developed, the opposition are be able to discharge its duties and alternative ideas provided by these parties are recognized, the parliament will have no option except to serve as a rubber stamp.

Mulugeta (2005) also describes explicitly that the ruling party-fused-executive leadership emerged as disproportionately dominant in the policymaking process and the effort that they have been exerting on initiating, influencing and legitimizing policies circumscribed the potential contributions of the legislatures.

From the above discussion it is understood that the strong ties between the two organs of government creates more trust, than engagement of legislature to their institution; permit little opportunity for legislators to take an independent stand and this in turn down the participation of the legislature to approval of legislation on narrow terms. This is certainly the case of all parliamentary governments that a fusion of powers, paradoxically, is the power it gives to the executive, not the legislative, arm of government. If the majority is made up of members of his /her own party, the head of government can use these supporters to control the legislature's business, thus protecting the executive from being truly accountable and at the same time passing any laws which are expedient for the government. A revolt by members of the government's own party is possible, but party discipline along with a tendency by many MPs to maintain their position for the next election makes such a revolt unsatisfactory.

In addition, in Ethiopia, the limited involvement of the opposition parties, the dominance of a ruling party in all government institutions reduced the willingness and the capacity of legislature to counter balance and challenge the action of the executive. As can be shown below in table 6 except in the 3<sup>rd</sup> term the trend of participation of opposition parties in HoPR is insignificant in the Ethiopian parliament. This may decrease the chance of the legislature to become an independent legislative decision making institution and to become an arena in which to criticize the government. When government rules without opposition partners, the tightness of the relationship between the members of the core executive which usually also at the same time be members of parliament and the capacity of the dominant party's leaders to control outcomes, will be at its maximum (Lane and Narud 1994).

Table 6: Party Composition in HoPRs in the Four Parliamentary Terms

Parliamentary Term	Parties and their Number of Seats								Total
	EPRDF		EPRDF Allied Parties		Opposition Parties		Private contender		
	No of Seats		No of Seats		No of Seats		No of Seats		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1 <sup>st</sup> term 1995/96-2000	490	9.5%	45	8.2%	4	0.73%	8	1.4%	547
2 <sup>nd</sup> term 2000/01-2005	479	7.5%	45	8.2%	10	1.8%	13	2.3%	547
3 <sup>rd</sup> term 2006-2010	365	6.7%	45	8.2%	136	24%	1	0.18%	547
4 <sup>th</sup> term 2010-March, 2013	500	1.4%	45	8.2%	1	0.18%	1	0.18%	547

Source: the HoPRs Archives

Not only in Ethiopia, but globally also where parliamentary institutions and the executives are controlled and enrolled only by the member of ruling party, the latter will have an access to dominate the legislature and could monopolize the lawmaking process to promote its party's economic and social interests. Firstly, this can also be justified by the fact that, parliament is not only unable to represents citizens, but it is also unable to represents them collectively to promote certain broad policy tendencies. Parties serve not only to secure choice of votes, but also to ensure that these choices are carried out through into the work of parliament and into ongoing public debate. Secondly, since parliamentary system allows the house to organize the whipping system, it is obvious that party and the executive will have the lion's share in policymaking arenas. For instance in the UK House of Commons (the Whipping System), Whips have an important role in keeping MPs informed of forthcoming parliamentary business and maintaining the party's voting strength by ensuring members attend important debates and support their party in parliamentary divisions. This is what, Giliomee, et.al. (2001) write

that ostensible authority resides in the constitution, parliament and cabinet, but real authority and decision making occurs outside of formal constitutional structures such as Parliament and instead policies are conducted behind the closed doors of party forum.

Moreover, as it is noted in chapter two, in the Westminster-United Kingdom and the Japanese, the key feature of the legislative process is strongly controlled by the government, and the bigger the government's majority, the greater the government's control. Most legislation is initiated by the government and MPs of the party in power have relatively little scope to influence its content. Through the system of Whips, MPs who enforce party discipline, they are required to support their party line on almost all important legislative decisions. There are, however, some notable exceptions like Sweden which stands out as example of active legislatures. In Sweden, assembly members are mainly grouped in constituency, rather than party blocks, consequently private members' proposals they called (motioner) are ten times as numerous as government bills (Denis and Ian, 1989).

Presumably in Westminster-United Kingdom, the regulation of the HoPR (Article, 185) offered the government whips assigned by a ruling party to inform members of their party in the parliament about agendas of the House beforehand to cause their members to attend sittings and vote for their party. Consequently, MPs are considered to vote in accordance to the structure of their party for one thing that is their belief, if not to keep themselves in office through redeployment.

In light of policymaking theories, the above discussions vividly show that the Ethiopian parliamentary system has put the formal and legal aspect of governmental institutions that dictates policy to be authoritatively determined, legitimated and implemented. Nevertheless, the examination of the relationship of these institutions and empirical data show policymaking in Ethiopia are dominated by the preference of the elites from the executives/ruling party. Both the ruling party and the executive are decisive in determining policies as they are responsible to propose policies and to determine the nature of institutions to implement policies. As described in the literature, in the context of developing countries, the primary source of power for the policy elites is highly the wielding of political offices and agencies (Anderson, 2003). As a result both the political and bureaucratic elite fashion mass opinion than masses shaping the leaderships views (Saasa, 1985). However, although institutional structures arrangements and procedures often have important consequences for the adoption and content of public policies that provide part of the context for policymaking; the interests of governing elite preferences are carried into effect by bureaucratic agencies. This depicts that the Elite theory is dominating the policymaking process in Ethiopia.

In addition to the criticism mentioned on the competence of the legislature, and as revealed by Franchino (2008), being the parliamentary government, legislature in Ethiopia enjoys the delegation of considerable discretion to executive who are in charge of administering existing policies and drafting new legislation within their jurisdiction. To the researcher's view, in the case of Ethiopia two facts should also be recognized. Firstly, the past history of the country where development, peace and democracy were denied and became a question of survival to continue as a sovereign country, it is obvious that the option of the government as well as the ruling party has to balance and appreciate such type of arrangement to reduce policy gridlocks, to run its policies and programs easily, and to ensure stability and continuity in governance.

Secondly, with the reality that round-table political debate tradition were not developed as a culture and the participation of the opposition party is somewhat weak, it gives outright passage of policies designed and presented to the parliament by the ruling party. Hence, unless the political competition culture is enriched, legislative authority formally rests to the Parliament, will be reduced to mere approval of bills drafted by the dominant party led executive. However, it may also be argued that this could be compensated by greater participation of the people in the formulation of policies and plans in an organized manner. Moreover, governing parties need to recognize that an effective and responsible opposition is essential for the success of the functioning of parliamentary political systems since genuine political opposition is a necessary attribute of democracy, tolerance, and trust in the ability of citizens to resolve differences by peaceful means.

#### **Legislature - Executive Relationship in the Law/Policymaking Process**

As it is described in the foregoing parts, enormous policymaking power is vested on the executive. The executive is overwhelming possessing both the power of initiating and implementing policies whereas the legislature is limited with the power of approving policies. Therefore, the question that should be posed here is how the Ethiopian legislature, as a body that represents the people, reflects and meets the needs of the people; and how the separation of power is between the legislature and executive can be maintained in Ethiopian parliamentary system.

The Constitution article (55, 17) has offered the HoPR to call and question the Prime Minister and other federal officials and to investigate the executive's conduct and discharge of its responsibilities. Accordingly, the Prime Minister should present reports regarding the general operation of the government to the House periodically (Article 74, 11). The HoPR has the power, at the request of one-third of its members, to discuss any matter pertaining to the powers of the executive, and to take decisions or measures it deems necessary. Moreover, the HoPR has set mechanisms and procedures that enable the MP's to oversee the activities and performance of



the executives (Regulation No. 3/2006). According to the regulation the House shall supervise and follow up the implementation and the direction of the national polices, strategies, plans, laws and operations towards advancing the country's development, observing the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens, and ensuring the proper implementation of the budget and resources of the federal government 74 (1). The House is also empowered not only to cause a given governmental office to recognize its problem and give it directives to correct its weakness but also to cause a measure to be taken through the Prime Minister on the body responsible for the problem, where the problem is not corrected and where it is serious. Moreover the house is responsible to take the necessary measures where problems are created by institutions directly accountable to the House though the Constitution does not enumerate what kinds of measures that the House may take. More importantly, the Legislature holds the power to approve the budget when it is submitted to it by the executive organ. This indirectly has the effect of entailing a power to the Legislature there by finishing a valid ground for the Legislature to oversee the activities of the executive body. Hence, the House has the power to conduct effective oversight over the executive action.

The MP's also strongly believe that the principle of separation of power in Ethiopia can be maintained during the approval and after the enactment of the policy or the law. The engagement of members as well as the several standing committees in the scrutiny of law and oversight function, (listen to and evaluate the report by the executive, provide feedback to the executive, and visit different entities) is to evaluate the implementation of policies. In doing so, however, the MPs mentioned that lack of technical knowledge, resources both financial and expertise to consult them, are hindering the task of parliamentary field works to carry out oversight.

The Chairperson of the standing committee also promotes the above idea. Since the Ethiopian parliament is at infant stage, the members and the institution itself lacks the capacity to use the power given, particularly to challenge the executive which has triple powers: (party power, government power and resource power), and is in a better position with a well established institution, in expertise, knowledge and experience, the parliament are not seen in debating and challenging the executive; as the effort to substitute bills, or initiate laws are aborted.

On their part, the key informants from the academics and civil society's argued that since the party which controls both the legislature and the executive plays a significant role in policy process, check and balance seems very weak in the Ethiopian parliamentary context. They also noted that even though the instances of parliaments to oversight the implementation of executives is contributing to some extent to keep the check and balance between the two organs of government, it cannot be a guarantee since the executive prevails in its capacity; it is difficult for ordinary MPs to challenge their party chiefs sitting in the executive for fear of reprisal and breach of party discipline. According to them, this starkly makes the role of the oversight to be no more than a nominal gesture that does not result in to even a minimum itch to the executive other than serving as media consumption. Therefore, the balance between the two remains lop-sided and this is the apparent missing-link in Ethiopia.

A study conducted on the parliamentary oversight by Awol (2011) also sums up that in all cases, political factors and considerations have undermined the role of parliaments as bodies that failed to foster mechanisms of checks and balances that are pivotal in checking and controlling the mode of operation of the executive. He further noted that the measures that the House may take on the government agencies or organs that found to commit a fault, is to be taken through the chief-executive, the regulation empower PM to recommend the House the measures that could possibly be taken against those government organs. This situation makes the chief-executive to be left unsupervised and unchecked for no one is empowered by the regulation to recommend the possible measures that could be taken against the chief-executives (ibid).

More importantly, however it is subject to debate, what senior academics commented that overseeing is naturally not the function of the legislature. They also remarked that these days the Ethiopian Parliament has reverted to the activity of overseeing simplistic matters than its central role of debates and dialogues on policy and policymaking. The legislature is shifted to the role of the executive of monitoring and overseeing routines and masterminded by the executive.

Despite the fact that the Great Britain and Australia have a similar structure, the opposition parties are so strong that they can counter balance and challenge the actions of the executive. For instance, in the Australian system ministers are subject to the scrutiny of other Members of the Parliament led by an officially recognized opposition; and the Executive does not necessarily control both Houses of the Parliament (Reynolds, 2011). Whereas in Ethiopia, the only committee chaired by the opposition is the Public Accounts Committee, which is mandated to oversee the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of government financial management. Nonetheless, the executive enjoys the power overwhelming of initiating policies, legislature has an essential power of scrutinizing and approving laws/policies, at the federal levels as well as any kind of agreement made by the executive organ with foreign governments. Moreover parliament is also called upon to ensure that policies are properly implemented and delivered to target citizens. In this regard Ethiopia has built-in mechanisms for regular questioning of ministers.

However, data/information collected from different respondents reveal that, checks and balances between the executive and the legislator are not fully maintained in the lawmaking process. For one reason, the executive is not separated from the legislative as the members of the government member of the legislative body; and for another, the legislative activity of the parliaments has become under control of the government and party. As described by John and Robert (1999) the political space, the extent to which executives and parties cede, lose, share, exchange or let slip the power they hold is determinant of how much power a legislature can exercise. Moreover, MP's encounter lack of expertise knowledge and a difficulty in getting expert advice and opinion on matters that require technocratic skills in specialized knowledge. Indeed the Ethiopian Parliament is less likely to develop large expert staff to rival government ministries, and it is less likely to exercise aggressive legislative and oversight since its own allies are typically in charge of executive agencies. More importantly, the parliament and the executives, as an institution, are not on equal footing since the experience of parliamentary practice in Ethiopia is in its lower profile and its institutional capacity is limited compared to the executive which has a long history and in a relatively better capacity. In the existing situation, therefore, it seems difficult for the parliament to exercise its full constitutional mandates discretely unless the power of the executive is limited. Hence the above discussion shows that the effect of being a parliamentary where separation of power is in a more fluid situation compounded by insufficient institutional capacity impedes the Ethiopian parliament to maintain separation of power and constitutional rule of law for what in developed democracies is characterize as a limited government whose role and mandates cannot transgress its constitutional limits.

#### **Public Participation in the policymaking process of HoPRs**

As it is noted in the theoretical chapter, the role of citizens in a democracy is not limited by the act of electing a government; they need to be continually engaged with it if it is to remain in touch with the people and their needs. A democratic parliament, for its part, will seek to foster a vibrant civil society and to work closely with it in finding solutions to problems facing the country, and in improving the quality and relevance of legislation (Beetham, 2006). Citizen participation is the most acceptable root to encourage participatory democracy in the hope of making the government more accountable thereby then to obtain the vibrant policy ownerships from the public to hasten the implementation of the policies. The Constitution article 43(2) holds that 'Nationals have the right to participate in national development and, in particular, to be consulted with respect to policies and projects affecting their community'. This has been further illustrated under article 89 (6), as: 'Government shall at all times promote the participation of the people in the formulation of national development policies and programs; it shall also have the duty to support the initiatives of the people in their development endeavors'. Hence, the public has been granted the constitutional rights to have their say to policies affecting their community. The Parliament's first duty with regard to public involvement is to afford to consider the public and all interested parties a reasonable opportunity to be heard and to make written or oral presentations at a time and in the manner that could influence the Parliament's decision on the legislation concerned. On top of that, the government is also responsible to support and facilitate civil societies in their attempt to develop the nation, among other things, through helping them fully participate in the policymaking processes.

In addition to the constitution, the regulation of HoPRs (Article 153) clearly sets the obligation to facilitate public involvement in their legislative and other processes and of their committees. Consequently, the standing committees are required to apply different ways to set up public forums and gather the opinion from the public, the concerned stakeholders and other invited experts and professionals to give their opinion on the draft law. Besides to organizing, the public hearings and the forums the procedure demands the committee, publicize a means for individuals who have not been able to attend the sittings, to give their opinions on the agendas (Article 153:6). Moreover, the procedure allows the public forums to be prepared on the premises of the House or any other place.

Nonetheless, the procedure of parliament expresses firmly that the committees should collect information pertaining to different experiences and practices; it does not clearly set in its procedure, the need to participate the public as a constitutional obligation for the house as policy makers and a right for the public. Furthermore which types of law/policy and at which level the participation of the citizen is reasonable and effective is not determined by the procedure.

According to the response from the MPs' a reasonable opportunity is offered to members of the public and all interested parties to know about the issues and to have an adequate say through public hearings unless the urgency of the matter limits the time for discussion. The HoPRs makes an open invitation for submissions to all interested parties, individuals as well as organizations, through the press and other media. Some questions were raised to assess how the citizen's participation is in HoPRs law making process. Unanimously, except the opposition MP, all leveled the participation of the public, civil society organization (CSO) and expertise in at intermediary level while think-tanks and research groups are in a lesser extent. Contrary to this, however, the opposition MP ranked all the participation of citizen, CSO, expertise research organization and other think thank groups is at a much lesser level.

Moreover the MPs noted that there are neither "healthy" CSO nor strong political pressure groups that

can initiate alternative policy ideas pro the interest of the people and development that can influence the government into changing the direction of policies. According to their views, no institute can be mentioned as an interest group or think-tank group or research institute as basically working with the House in consulting and providing information to support the legislature to formulate and pass effective legislation and perform effective scrutiny of government.

Nonetheless, during the interviews, the chair persons of standing committees revealed that the effort made by the House to involve the public is not that much satisfactory enough for the following reasons. Firstly, the institutional arrangement for public hearings is not enough to promote a sense of awareness about policy initiatives amongst the public; and the knowledge of the public about the legislative institution itself is limited. The systems that are used by the House to help the public participate are limited. For instance, the public hearings are limited to Addis Ababa. The house lacks a well developed information technology system to give all the public access to hearings. Secondly, because of past long authoritarian history of the country, most of the people are not participating and those who come to attend are not coming with full awareness and motivation to influence the policy ideas; sound political culture has not developed yet. They also claimed that neither the public nor the CSO's are in a position to create strong political pressure and force government into changing the direction of policies in a significant extent. However, the chairperson of the standing committee and MPs, agree that ideas given by the public and CSO would be incorporated unless they are irrelevant or in contradiction to the pillars of the government policies and programs.

The opposition MP, mentioning the land lease proclamation as an example, noted that the floor organized by the House is not only limited but is also carried out for the sake of formality. He also claimed that members of the ruling party in the parliament always believe the draft proposed by the executive are neat and complete to the desired level. As a result, the public hearings as well as the reading sessions are wasted in editorial works rather than on debates in policy directions and contents.

Survey responses of the academics and civil societies, also describe that the public, civil societies and other interested bodies participation is not adequate in the process. Their claim can be summarized as follows:

- a. Most policies are not presented for public discussion; policy makers encounter a significant question and even those presented for public discussion are presented as 'finished products', and prior consultations are not usually held with the public before those policies are formulated. As result policy makers mostly observed back to open discussions with the grass root after the policy legitimated and publicized.
- b. Public forums are organized for the sake of formality, and comments and concerns raised in those forums are not used as input to amend and/or change the draft policies so that the draft laws/policies presented for public discussion are almost always issued as the final version.
- c. Usually, the only opportunity for public participation during law making is the public hearings at parliament, though the hearing is limited to the Addis Ababa community. They added not only the scope for public participation in the policymaking process is inhibited, but the room for demand articulation and aggregation by civil societies and stakeholders is also weak. The effort made to enhance quality participation and representation of diverse views in such discussions is said to be less.
- d. Lack of culture to involve in public dialogue, and active citizenship added with an ambiance of withdrawal and self-censorship, biases and lack of civic activism from the side of many of the experts, and misgivings against the government are mentioned as major problems for the low participation of the public in the policymaking process.

Moreover, respondents from CSOs claimed that the proclamation on the Charities and Societies has marginalized and disabled the attempts made by CSOs (for instance as the forum organized by Inter-Africa Group) to create forums for public dialogue and debate on policy matters. The Proclamation has already precluded CSOs' getting foreign funds from participation in policy formulation area, specifically, policy advocacy.

They also noted the participant CSO mostly mentioned by the MPs are mass organizations sponsored by the government. According to them these organizations are not capable of filling the gap since they are not seen as "neutral" but they are rather, "appendages" of the ruling party and hence subject to the democratic centralism principles. In the words of a leader of one CSO:

*These organizations lack both the capacity and the commitment to be genuine platforms for public debate and discussion on policy matters. Instead, they serve as instruments of indoctrination by the ruling party; while they don't have any chance to influence its policies-relation between the two has always been of one-way traffic.*

The aforementioned discussion shows, the relationship between the House and citizens, CSO, research organizations and think-tank groups is weak. The members did not know even about think-tank group called (Center for Development Studies) established before a year ago with the aim to promote and facilitate the national interest, multiparty democracy, constitutionalism and democratic developmental political economy

through independent public policy research, analysis and advice.

There is a substantial lack of trust between the House and CSOs; the House suspects some CSOs' have political interest and are politically affiliated, where as the CSOs' consider others groups such as mass organizations as government-inspired and financed institutions whose neutrality is subject to question in the eyes of non-MPs. Moreover the representativeness of the participants for a particular constituency or social interest is not adequate and also need to be considered. These concerns indicate the importance of parliament legislating to provide both a facilitative and a transparent framework within which the organizations of civil society can operate. The German Bundestag, for example, has specific rules stipulating that groups wishing to express or defend their interests before the legislature must be entered on a register. The Polish Parliament was at the time of writing processing a bill on lobbying activities, which it defines as any kind of activity carried out by lawful means aimed at influencing public authorities to take into consideration arguments and interests of specific social or professional groups (Beetham, 2006).

The researcher had got an opportunity to participate in the public hearings held on Megabit 27, 2005. The policy issue was on the inspection of the FDRE human rights action plan (2003-2007) which was proposed by the Council of Minister. The House publicized the public hearing to the general public to attend or make submissions through the Ethiopian Radio, Television, and letter written to access to deliberations. Invitation had also been made to respective bodies from different ministries, agencies, civil society organizations, political parties in letter attached with the draft document. Consequently, about 33 people attended the public hearing excluding participants from the House. These were: 10 people from the civil society organization, 18 Expertise from the government offices, 2 people from political parties, 2 people from the citizen, 1 participant from Gonder University, and 11 members from the Standing committees. The attendance shows that there is an effort to call for participation from diverse groups though the number of the participants needs improvement. During the public hearing, the task force established from the Human Rights Commission of Ethiopia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ombudsman that drafted the law briefed the overall process of the development of the plan/policy.

The participants forwarded so many questions and comments including their threats that since the document has been approved by the council of ministers, their suggestions may not be incorporated. They also expressed their concern that the document was fully complied with full intention of the government and lacks the interest of the public. The public hearing was not enough as the action plan is the national level and citizens at the grass root level must involve in view of the fact that the human rights is the issue of everyone.

The floor was wide open to hear all the participants and every participant got a meaningful opportunity to be heard and to make written or oral representations at a time including comments blaming the government freely, and all the questions and suggestions are recorded electronically. The records of meetings and plenary session verbatim transcripts are documented and available to the public in the library of the HoPR.

The task force accepted some of the comments and tried to answer the questions raised by the participants. Worth mentioning concerning the participation of the public in the process of the policy drafting, is the confirmation that about 33 floors are organized at the center as well in all regions. During the discussion, some participants expressed their threats that their suggestions may not be incorporated, mentioning their experience that the government is not willing to change its policies. But the chair person spoke firmly that their comments would be taken if they are convincing and he invited those who have any additional comment to submit written representations in the manner that could influence the decision on the legislation concerned. Nonetheless, this should not be a grantee to consider the views expressed by members of the public in the legislation, the researcher observed there, an open mind that demands to hear all the participants, and the public hearing was a good enabler to Parliament to inform itself of the views of the people.

Moreover, there is an attempt to offer media coverage (news, press release and programs) to the meetings of parliament, and committee oversight activities; transmit discussions and avail members' votes to the public through television and radio programs. This will have a significant contribution to inform and educate citizens if properly handled and used.

The other important requirements of the parliament that should be considered as a basic issue, is the need for parliamentarians to be accessible to their constituents so that they can fulfill their democratic and constitutional obligations as representatives of the people. Pursuant to the Procedures and Code of Conduct of the House, Article (102-104) any member may, where necessary, meet with the people that elected him at any time of his choice including when they are in recess. However, the number of times in a year is not specified in the regulation, all the respondents from MPs' explained that they are visiting their constituents only twice a year. The fact that most MPs' is often far away from citizen's their attempts to reach and consult their representatives on a continuous basis, gather information and used as a source of input into the policy-making process is limited, compared to the other countries such as Zambia where the fixed office is established equipped with the professional assistant for each constituency. In Zimbabwe as well, the establishment of Parliament Constituency Information Centers (PCICs) in all 120 constituencies, as a base for parliamentary generated information, the



centers enable the public to be involved in the legislative process from a more informed standpoint (Beetam, 2006, 183). The center also holds a socio-economic database of the area, regularly updated, which serves to identify some of the most pressing issues and areas of need in the constituency. Such type of center/institution is absent in Ethiopia; there is no clear system except reporting, to collect the issues raised by each constituency such as Issue Bank as in the experience of other countries.

The importance of the public participation in the public policymaking process has got a constitutional protection; the need to facilitate public participation is also outlined in the procedure of the House. However the procedure of parliament lacks an important factor relevant to determining reasonableness in the involvement of the public in the legislative process. Providing sufficient access to the public to participate relies on the good will of each committee's decision. Besides public hearing, HoPRs requires an independent organization aiming at conveying the views, aspirations and proposals of the civil sector to the Parliament. In most countries independent organization facilitate the Forum of Parliamentary Dialogue to activate the dialogue between parliament and the citizen to further communication. Such organization does not exist in Ethiopia.

From the aforementioned discussion, it is possible to understand that the participation of the citizens and CSO and other stakeholders is not as much as to articulate their demand and influence the policy. The relationship of parliaments with civil society organization and outside researcher can be said to be immature. Lack of a sound political culture together with the absence of CSO and strong political pressure groups that can influence government policy, impede the experience of a participatory policymaking process in Ethiopia. The involvement and direct participation of the public in the policy legislation process needs improvement.

### **Institutional Infrastructure and Capacity of HoPRs**

The Legislature enjoys both the powers to make laws and to oversight the performance of the government. Lawmaking requires reconciling differences once articulated, as well as pressing the legislature's claim to power against the executive and other power-holders, such as political parties. It requires legislative processes capable of reconciling conflicts and bringing to bear enough expertise to be taken seriously by the executive branch and other actors in the system. The challenge, however, is how to find a balance between an empowered Legislature and an effective executive. In other words, for parliamentarians to effectively carry out their respective oversight roles and responsibilities, it is not sufficient for them to have legal authority. Therefore the next discussion focuses on the assessment of institutional infrastructure and resource of the HoPRs.

### **The Human Resource in the HoPRs**

#### **1. The Members of the House**

The Constitution article (54) stipulates that members of HoPR are elected for a five-year term on the basis of universal suffrage and by direct, fair, and free elections held in secret ballot. Accordingly, members shall be elected from among candidates in each electoral district by a plurality of votes cast; and members of the HoPR shall not exceed 550 of which at least 20 seats are reserved for minority nationalities 54(3).

Though, it is impossible to specify the level of knowledge of the legislature that is necessary for law making, there is a general consensus that the parliamentarians, as a higher power holder of the country, must have the capacity to run their responsibilities. Thus, this researcher has tried to see the educational, regional and gender composition of the MPs' to get some insight on the existing parliament.

Table: 7 The Regional, and Educational level Composition of HoPR for the Fourth Term

Region	No. of MPs	Coverage in %	Educational Status		Diploma	Secondary School Complete	Primary School Complete	Remark Not known
			Masters Degree & Above	Bachelor Degree				
Oromia	178	32.5	49	89	27	-	2	11
Amhara	138	25.2	32	62	39	1		4
SNNP	123	22.5	30	56	19	11	-	7
Tigray	38	6.9	11	18	2	-	-	7
Somali	23	4.2	7	8	3	3	2	
Afar	8	1.4		1	1	-	6	
Benishangul Gumuz	9	1.6	1	5	2	1	-	
Gambella	3	0.5	2	1	-	-	-	
Hareri	2	0.3	-	2	-	-	-	
Diredawa	2	0.3	-	2	-	-	-	
Addis Ababa	23	4.2	15	3	-	-	-	5
Total	547	100	147 (26.7%)	247 (45.1 %)	93 (17%)	16 (2.9%)	10 (1.8%)	34 (6.2 %)

Source: The HoPRs Achieves

As can be seen in table 7, the educational attainment of the members of HoPR shows that, Oromia, Amhara,

SNNRP and Tigray cover 87% of the seats as they are covering the largest population. Oromia has the highest representation in the HoPR followed by Amhara, SNNP and Tigray. The remaining 13% MPs' come from emerging regions (Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambels and Somali) Harari, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. The above table portrays that 147 (26.7%) of MPs hold Masters Degree and above, and 247(45.1 %) have Bachelor Degrees. The educational composition can be considered relatively adequate in the Ethiopian overall literacy context or compared to the educated population of the country. However, it can also be said inadequate compared to the developed countries and the analytical capacity that a policymaking requires.

In almost all societies, politics has been a traditional male preserve, and there have been considerable barriers to women's involvement. Even in Western democracies the extension of the suffrage to women, the opportunity for access to public office came relatively late. As per the 2006 record, women represent only some 16.4% of all legislators in the world's parliaments (Saige, 2008).

Although it demands a full-fledged research work to examine the real participation of women and their influence in realizing their benefits, women representation is not an end by itself in which women as human beings take their fair share in political decision makings through representing their proportion in the society (Judith, 1999). The fact that political representation is a means to achieve the purpose in which the interests of the members and their constituencies are taken into consideration in parliamentary decisions, women representation is likely to be a criterion for parliaments. The following table demonstrates the sex composition of the MPs in the four consecutive terms of office.

Table 8: Gender Composition in the Four Consecutive Terms of Office

Parliamentary Term	Sex Composition				Total
	Male		Female		
	In No.	In %	In No.	In %	
1 <sup>st</sup> term 1995/96-2000	534	97.6%	13	2.4	547
2 <sup>nd</sup> term 2000/01-2005	505	92.3%	42	7.7	547
3 <sup>rd</sup> term 2006-2010	430	78.6%	117	21.4	547
4 <sup>th</sup> term 2010-March, 2013	395	72.2%	152	27.8	547

Source: The HoPRs Archives

The data in table 8 shows, previously gender parity were far from being attained in the HoPRs. The number of women in 1995 election constitutes only 13, (2.3%) out of 547 seats while after the 2000 elections 42 (7.6%) of the elected MPs' were women. This data show that women were not considered as capable of decision-makers. But there has been progress in the latter's representation. During the third election, the government had attempted to increase the number of women legislators to 30-50% of the house, through different measures. In response to gender parity particularly the ruling party (EPRDF) introduced a gender quota system that committed the party to reserve at least 30% of seat for women candidates to promote women's participation in legislature. Consequently, the number of women holding seats rose to 117 (21.4%). Currently out of the 547members of parliament, 152 MPs (28%) are women. These women are actively engaged in various standing committees. This is three times as many compared to previous elections and acceptable proportion like in many European parliaments.

Besides, Legislature experience is one of significant factors for the house to have specialized members. The limitations on the number of tenure a member may serve differ from country to country; in some countries legislators can be immediately reelected, but up to only two legislative terms. Others, such as Mexico and Costa Rica, prohibit immediate reelection of lower house members. The table under here shows the extent of the turnover of MPs' in HoPRs.

Table: 9 Re-elected MPs' in HoPR

Regions	Total No of MPs	No. of re-elected MPs	Terms of Parliament
Oromia	178	32	31 MPs -2 times; 1MP- 3 times
Amhara	138	25	23 MPs-2 times; 3 MPs-3 times; 1MP -4 times
SNNRP	123	25	All are elected 2 times
Tigray	38	20	16 MPs- 2 times; 3 MPs- 3 times; 1MP – 4 times
Somali	23	4	2 MPs – 4 times; 2 MP – 2 times
Afar	8	3	2 MPs – 2 times; 1 MP – 3 times
Gambela	9	1	2 times
Benishangul Gumuz	3		
Harari	2		
Addis Ababa	2	2	2 times
Diredawa	23	1	2 times
<b>Total</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>113 (20%)</b>	

Source: the HoPRs Achieve

Although, the opportunity to be a candidate is in the hands of the parties, table 9 depicts that MPs' in HoPRs are

not prohibited from re-election and serve the House for another tenure term. Consequently, 113 (20%) MPs were-elected and have got the chance to serve the house for more than two terms. Of 113 re-elected members, four members were elected four times; eight, three times; and the rest one hundred one members were passed through two terms. Therefore, having over hundred experienced MPs will contribute much for the efficiency and effectiveness of the HoPR unless it is prohibited by other matters.

The other component that determines the effectiveness of the parliament is the political will that the strength of the desire of parliamentary leaders and members have to exercise or expand the powers of parliament and their personal motivation to influence policy. In this regard, for the questions raised on their political will and their personal vision to continue as MP, most of them responded that except the vision they share from their party, they do not have a personal vision to continue as a legislature since their fate to persist as MP is decide by their party.

Moreover, the researcher envisages that the aforementioned dominance of the government in the policymaking, the narrow political space given to the legislature to make laws, together with the imbalance between the two that characterize the house as insufficient capacity will have a negative effect on their institutional consciousness.

Despite the fact that not least people perceive the MPs as uneducated, sitting only to vote for their party's interest, the educational status is found at sufficient level to carry out their duties if supported by on job trainings made by the house to enhance their capacity. However like in most parliamentary countries, what deems necessary is, building the confidence of the people on HoPR through parliamentary reform. For instance the Australian House of Representatives carried out a reform with the aim to keep the parliamentary institution relevant to the needs and perceptions of the public it represents (Beetam, 2006: 189). The Canadian Parliament describe 'Restoring public confidence' as part of the objective of reforms; and the Netherlands Parliament has identified 'Working hard to regain citizens' trust' as the impetus behind its many recent initiatives since an essential characteristic of democracy is to make people feel represented by them (ibid).

#### **The Administrative Staff Capacity of the House**

There are about 360 employees who run the office of the Parliament. The Legal Drafting, Research and Oversight Professional Support Directorate /*Yehig Awotat, Yekititlena ena kutitiir Muyawi Digaf Direktorat/* is the main support staff for law making and legal research function of the parliament. The directorate organized in two sections called: Legal Research, Information and Library Team /*Yetinatna, Mereja ena Library Team/* and Meeting Organizer and Printing Service Team/*Yesibsebana Yehitmet Agelgelot Team/*. Based on the structure of the Directorate, 126 personnel are expected to be deployed and serve the standing committees and MPs on law/policymaking issues.

Each standing committee has its own officer and secretary. The structure also holds researchers and subject specialist case teams, professional librarians, information technology engineers and technicians, and minute organizers. The legal drafting and research case teams comprise three case teams: social issues case team, economy issues case team and legal issues case teams. The case teams are responsible to carry out research, collect evidence from witnesses, scrutinize legislation and conduct inquiries and prepare briefing material for members of the committee. The expertise in the case teams are the most important bodies that can offer specialist knowledge, in-depth analysis and information on a specific subject matter to meet the needs of the committee in performing its law making function. They are responsible to conduct research on different policy issues. Moreover they liaise with committee clerks in responding to requests from Members of Parliament and committees, and help prepare briefing papers on subjects of public and parliamentary concern. There are also statisticians that are responsible in analyzing statistical research products. The following table shows the existing human resource and the vacant positions under the directorate.

Table: 10 the Human Resource Capacity in the Legal drafting, research and oversight professional support directorate

Section	The position	Total	The existing human resource
<b>The Legal Drafting, Research oversight professional support</b>			
<b>General Directorate</b>			
Standing Officers	16		16
Secretary of the Directorate & Standing Committees	17		17
<b>Legal Research, Information and Library Team</b>			
Social Issues Research Case Team	9		1
Economy Issues Research Case Team	10		1
Legal Issues Research Case Team	10		4
Library	10		9
Information Technology	9		6
<b>Meeting Organizer and Printing Service Team</b>			
Minute organizer and editors	18		16
Translator	7		2
Electronic Equipment Technicians	3		2
Printing	17		16
Total	126		90

Source: The Human Resource Department at HoPRs

As shown in the table 10 above, the parliament office has done much to organize the structure with relevant and specialized human power. For instance the structure of the three case teams which is responsible for research policy issues, draft laws, monitor legal drafts, plan and reports that are proposed by the executive are organized consisting of 30 experts, each team is allotted to have about 10 positions that consist from junior to senior expertise. However most of the positions on specialized teams are vacant. There are only eight experts of whom half of them are at junior level; and each case team has only one or two expertise whose dual responsibility to serve the 547 MPs and the sixteen Standing Committees overwhelm their number and capacity.

Human resource capacity is almost non-existent in the area of research and skills for policy analysis that are essential for supporting the key legislative functions. According to the interview notes with the standing committees and the directorate, most of the positions are vacant for the reason that the market could not avail them. They also believe that the professional and skilled personnel available are inadequate in number and lack the capacity to provide relevant and adequate support to the standing committees. Although the committees, in all cases, endeavor to fulfill their mandates, their work has been severely hamstrung by the very weak human and financial resources available. Lacking the required technical expertise, the committees have to rely on experts for the scrutiny and analysis expected of official reports.

A random interview with experts also revealed that there are complaints by the members of the standing committee. But they noted, this is not because of lack of the capacity, rather the office is not using their expertise on such strategic issues and most parliamentarians were oblivious of the existence of the researchers and very few had ever attempted to use their services.

Parliaments by their very nature are often made up of representatives with varying backgrounds and expertise. In addition to lack of time, the immense range of policy issues with which parliament deals (e.g. Education, Health, Energy, Finance, etc.) makes it impossible for any single MP to be an expert in all areas; therefore, it becomes absolutely critical that research information is repackaged and presented in a meaningful form for use by Members of Parliament.

Particularly, in parliaments where executives are dominant and are encouraged to initiate laws/policies, they inevitably have to rely heavily on the staff for expert knowledge and advice in any new policy they recommend for legislation. In view of this fact, the capacity of the case teams of HoPR seems unthinkable to deliver their responsibilities. The HoPRs lacks the necessary expertise and knowledge that would understand the very nature of the subject matter that needs legislation.

Scholars agree that in practice especially those in emerging democracies, increasingly rely on information from researchers in universities, research institutions, think-tanks and civil society organizations to complement the work of the parliamentary research team. However, in Ethiopia, not only is the capacity of the research team low but the connection between the parliaments and research institutes is also not bridged. To sum up, lack of adequate professionally staff skilled in research and analysis impedes the HoPR to play their deliberative roles in policy issues effectively and advance the legislature's institutional autonomy, and reduced



the capacity of the legislature to deal with the executive branch across a wide range of topics in sufficient depth and to be serious governing partners.

### Financial Resource of HoPR

The HoPR's financial resources are secured in a separate line in the national budget, treated like any other ministry, and agency of government. Once approved, the budget moves from the Ministry of Finance and is placed under the control of the clerk of financial administration section of HoPR. The issue here is whether the HoPR's annual subvention is adequate to support the organizational needs and personnel emoluments.

Table 11: The Budget of HoPR and Compensation and Allowances of MPs over the Past Five Years (2008-2013)

Year	Annual Budget of the House		Compensation and Allowances of the MPs			
	Budget of the House	Budget Increment in percent	Salary	Allowances Committee allowance	House allowance	Other allowances
2008/9	58,025,152		3000	250 for Chair person 200 for D/Chair person 150 for members	850	-
2009/10	61,637,100	6%	3000	“	850	-
2010/11	71,135,106	15%	3000	“	850	-
2011/12	96,759,498	36%	4050	“	850	-
2012/13	101,730,000	5%	4050	400 for Chair person 300 for D/Chair person 200 for members	1500	450

Source: Finance Procurement and Property Administration Directorate

The above financial record in table 11 demonstrates the HoPR has enjoyed an increment in funding over the past five financial years, receiving 58.02 million Birr during 2008/9, 61.6 million in 2009/10, 71.1 million in 2010/11, 96, 7 million in 2011/12 and 101.7 million for the current year, 2012/13. Except the steady increase reflected consequentially in the upward adjustment of salaries for parliamentarians, (receiving in 2011/12 a monthly salary of 3000 birr that was appreciated to 4,050 birr in 2011/12), the budget increment compared to the inflation happened in the past two years can be counted as negligible. However the House is supported by United Nation Development Program (UNDP). For instance UNDP donated 21,321,622 birr for the 2012 budget year, intended to build the capacity of the House.

Put the budget side by side to the role and function of the House and compare it to other countries, the budget of the House is relatively less. Legislators' the primary clients, are particularly hard hit by the imbalance that circumscribes generous emoluments. Their current monthly salary of 4050 birr is meager in the context of expected financial obligations and comparison with salaries of MPs in the sub-region. For instance in 2007, the basic monthly salaries for MPs in Kenya and Uganda was \$10,000 and \$3,000 respectively plus sitting and other allowances. In absolute terms, Ethiopian MPs are therefore the least remunerated in the sub-region. The members are also financially constrained to consult their constituencies regularly to learn about local needs and solicit inputs for lawmaking and policy debates. The per diem paid for field work of 280 birr is not enough to cover their cost. As the payments are not satisfactory, it scarcely meets their essential requirements of the MPs'. Surprisingly enough, most of the MP's are accepted justifying it on the grounds of the capacity of the country to pay.

### Physical Resources of HoPR

The office of HoPR could be said to have reasonable legislative house however, it could not be named as one of the most modern legislative chambers in Africa. The oldest but impressive architecture of the House is fully equipped with the communication technology system and has ample space for, the public and the media during sittings. The Speaker, his deputy, the parliamentary committees and, several other officials has adequate private office space; each of the fifteen Standing Committees has their own office, and meeting rooms. Moreover there are adequate facilities and equipment such as, sound systems, phones, photocopiers, all said to be sufficient for what is required for the institution to function effectively. However MP's do not have individual offices or workstations, there is a space for them to share in groups; they scramble for space in the overstretched committee meeting rooms or within the library to do individual or private work.

The MPs have no complaint on the facilities. Though not fair to say everything is facilitated, the premises have created a good working environment to enable the MPs to engage in informal interactions. This condition will have a contribution to speed up effective and productive, pre and post-sitting interactions among parliamentarians and engagement.

Regarding the ICT infrastructure, a local area network has been deployed across departments and units with reliable Internet connections. An email system is facilitating communications among MPs and staff of the HoPR. A website also provides a Web access to parliamentary news, proceedings, proclamation, and other information including the profile of the House. However, the Website is not equipped with tools that make it possible for users to pose questions, send comments, take part in discussion forums and opinion surveys and subscribe to newsgroups according to their personal preferences; the house is yet to fully integrate ICT into its business operations.

The Parliamentary library built in the premise provides a service to both the house and external customers though is not spacious enough to accommodate a reasonable number of patrons at one time. The proclamations, minutes, and other relevant documents of the business of the houses are documented and accessed by the customers. However MPs noted that the library is not adequately stocked with relevant reference materials. The researcher observed the library is barely filled with the research outputs, and journals published by research organizations and universities. The Internet café provides service within the library. It has about 40 desktops. Since the MP's are offered personal laptops, the 40 desktops in the library can be considered enough.

To sum up, the educational level, gender composition and experience of the MPs' is in an agreeable level bearing in mind the standard of the country and the effort made to boost their capacity with on-job trainings. However, the internal capacity is weak to serve as an informed critic and a refiner of proposals shaped mainly by outside actors in the executive branch or in the party system. Consequently, the committees will be forced to rely on experts of the executive for the scrutiny and analysis expected of draft bills and official reports, and this will again hamper the effort to enhance independent legislation. The inadequate remunerations and allowances for MPs as well as the absence of legislative assistants and financial constraints stifle regular interactions with constituents, to travel regularly for consultations and information gathering, inputs from citizens into the legislative processes could be minimal. This condition makes difficult to ensure discharging own responsibilities and meeting citizens' expectations, concerns and priorities. All of this clouds the effectiveness of the House in its effort to law/policymaking.

### **Challenges of HoPRs in the Policymaking Process**

In many jurisdictions, the challenges confronting Parliaments in the law/policymaking can be explained on the basis of the number of Houses engaged in the policymaking process, formal power given to the legislature. Moreover, the amount of political space/discretion afforded by other power holder, most importantly by executive and parties; the ability and attitude of parliament regarding its functions and institution play an immense role (Saiegh, 2008; Beetam, 2006). Also significantly, the capacity of parliamentarians to scrutinize and debate on the draft bills proposed by executives is handicapped by the tendency of the incumbent executive branch of government to marginalize the legislature.

#### **1. Fusion of powers between the executive and the legislative branches**

As it is the case of parliamentary government, there is fusion of powers between the executive and the legislative branches. Moreover, the HoPRs and the executives are enrolled only by the member of ruling party. The strong ties between the two organs of government creates more trust, than engagement of legislature to their institution; permit little opportunity for legislators to take an independent stand and this in turn lowers down the participation of the legislature to approval of legislation on narrow terms. More importantly, the competence of the executive, together with its resource power, initially, reduced the confidence and the commitment of MPs' to debate, criticize, and challenge the bills submitted by the executive; the HoPRs cannot perform its best with respect to its task of challenging the executive ideas, as ruling party members have a clear unconditional support towards their political party. As Howlett & Ramesh (2003) revealed, the House is tightly organized along party lines, and marked by a high degree of cohesion and discipline. The greater loyalty to their political parties than the electorate may reduce their concern for the legislature as an institution. Through time members will lack a vision or concern for the power and development of their legislature as an institution. As John & Robert (1999) noted unless at least some key members are concerned about legislative power and the legislature, it is unlikely to improve.

#### **2. Limited contribution of a bicameral structure to policymaking process.**

In the case of Ethiopia, the first among other factors that greatly affects the effectiveness of parliamentary law/policymaking is lack of the House that can assist the HoPR in the lawmaking process. Since the second house-HoF, is a non legislative parliament, the bill might not be exposed for the more thorough scrutiny, and to a different range of opinion which prevents the house from ill-considered legislation, from being passed into law. Though some respondents noted that, the upper house is a political affiliated institution established from the ruling party and would not have an impact; it is in the HoF that the state and regional perspectives, or a wider range of experience or expertise will have an opportunity to produce further concessions in the proposed legislation.

### **3. Low involvement of opposition parties in the House**

Although political parties are currently not held in high regard by the public at large, they are nevertheless indispensable to the working of a democratic parliament. Operating as they do in both the spheres of government and citizen, they serve as an essential bridge between the two. In the present situation, as far as the composition of the HoPRs is concerned almost all are the members of the ruling party. Therefore, talking about the opposition's involvement here seems feeble. Suffice to say, the non existence of oppositions, has significantly diminished the way to alternatives decisions proposed by the government of the majority representatives in power.

### **4. Limited involvement of the citizen in the policymaking process**

Regarding the extent of participation of citizens in the policymaking process, constituencies, sectors and concerned interest groups are not given sufficient opportunities to be heard and to present their side on legislative issues. As it stands, the House does not conduct state or town-level public hearings and is confined in the capital city Addis Ababa. However, Committee meetings are open to the public despite that the procedure lacks an important factor relevant of parliament lacks an important factor relevant to determining its reasonableness of involving the public in the legislative process. Providing sufficient access to the public to participate relies on the good will of each committee's decision.

Moreover, the HoPRs lacks organizational procedures that promote further amicable communications channels between the HoPRs and the citizenry and civil society organizations to activate the participation of these organizations in the policy making process of HoPRs. Besides, the trust between the CSOs and the government is not well developed, the suspicion between retarded the participation. Legislators and constituents rarely interact. The twice travel of MP's in a year is not adequate for MPs' to reach and consult their representatives on a continuous basis, gather information and used as a source of input into the policy-making process. Moreover, there is no fixed office or center that enables the MPs' to improve constituents' access and interaction with the MP.

### **5. Low institutional capacity of the house**

Despite the fact that systems of divided government tend to vest greater independent lawmaking and oversight authority in legislatures, legislatures in all systems frequently lack the human and material capacity required to utilize the powers they do possess. With no doubt effective law/policymaking depends on the experts and adequate resources (both financial and manpower and technical), especially for the standing committees. Exercising law making entails a diverse range of issues, most of which are highly complex and difficult to comprehend without either MPs' seasoned experience or accumulating years of knowledge. If they do not have such knowledge and experience, attempting to debate on the draft bills and challenge the executive becomes extremely difficult. However, the experts found within parliament rarely match the experts of the governments. Till the end of this research, for instance, an acute staff shortage has obviously been surfaced in the areas where it has been badly needed, namely in the fields of professional legal support and research.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

In view of the theoretical context and the empirical evidences discussed in the preceding chapters, this chapter provides conclusions and recommendations. The Constitution, under Article 55 (1), and the rules of procedures and members' code of conduct of HoPRs Regulation No.3/2006, under Article (4), provides enactment of laws as one of the major functions of the parliament. Apparently, in most countries, members of the parliament and the committees in the parliament are entitled to introduce legislation. Besides, the Constitution article (77) defines the executive prime role in the policy process is to formulate and issue new policies or modify old ones; and Regulation No. 3/2006 under article (50) stipulates that initiating laws is mainly the duty of the government. Every ministry in the country is also empowered to initiate and/or formulate laws and policies by PMO. This vividly shows that power of policymaking is vested on both the HoPR and the executive; and it does not however give full expression to the notion of separation of powers. This is certainly the case of all parliamentary governments that a fusion of powers, paradoxically, is the power it gives to the executive, not the legislative, arm of government. Since the majority is made up of members of his /her own party, the head of government can use these supporters to control the legislature's business, thus protecting the executive from deadlock, passing any laws which are expedient for the government.

Therefore, the gigantic power and capacity, together with the close link between the legislature and executive enabled the latter to ensure exclusive leverage in the policymaking process. Besides, the belief of the MPs' that policies should be initiated by government or party leadership based on the party ideology from the beginning, depicts that the effort that the government/ruling party has been put forth on initiating policies not only restricted the potential contribution of the legislatures but also hinder the legislature to fully understand the rational and justification behind the need for legislature to initiate policies.

Though a revolt by members of the government's own party is possible for MPs in examining and legitimating the policies, party discipline along with a tendency by many MPs to maintain their position for the

next election makes such a revolt unsatisfactory. Often, MPs' are reluctant to debate and challenge a government that is made up of their party leadership for fear of being perceived as disloyal and as members have a clear unconditional support towards their party. All this will clearly impact the concern of the MPs' and their institutional consciousness for the legislature to stand as an independent institution. Besides, because of the minimal involvement of the opposition parties in the parliament, the benefit obtained from genuine political opposition which is a necessary attribute for democracy, tolerance, and trust in the ability of citizens to resolve differences by peaceful means, is loose in the existing parliament. This would mean that the legislature has little choices of exploring alternative public policies beyond the boundaries of the established party lines. Hence, the Elites are dominating the policymaking process of Ethiopia.

Nonetheless, to the researcher view, in Ethiopian Context, the elites have had relevant experience to stipulate nationwide priorities since they have been struggling for more than 20 years as a rabble fighter for freedom, social development and democratic rights. To be critical, policy driven tangible practices have undeniably, brought about relevant social, political and economic growth and development for the nation. However, other parties' participation and suggestions as an alternative reference point have received limited attention. That is why the researcher has concluded that the policy formulation process precisely can be categorized with Elites theoretical perceptions. Moreover, the important thing that should not be forgotten is that the cooperative relationship between the executive and legislature serves to facilitate the coordination of governmental powers and functions to formulate desired policies and implement programs of government; and provide the government a better ability to prevent policy gridlock/stalemate that may hinder the effort to fasten development.

Unlike, in conventional federal countries, the policies in Ethiopia are adopted only by the lower house-HoPR. In view of the law making, HoF is not enjoying the power of legislation in much the same manner as countries that have long instituted a parliamentary system of government. Appreciating the arrangement of the Ethiopian parliamentary government system in recognizing the reality of the country, being a non-legislative power, the remarkable issue here is, the policymaking process in Ethiopia is lacking the expert, the perspectives and the scrutiny and the clearance of the policies from being ill considered that can be provided by the second chamber.

The Constitution under article 43 (2), consists of democratic provisions that help to empower citizens to actively and freely participate in any activities including the policymaking process. Moreover, the government established a decentralized structure to enable the system to amplify the participation of the citizen in decision making, and increase the accountability of government. This depicts that the government has a firm stand to entertain pluralism through citizen participation in decision making. Being a democratic developmental state, the pluralist model of policymaking should characterize the Ethiopian policymaking process. However the participation of the citizens, and CSO and other stakeholders is not as much as to articulate their demand and influence the policy. Firstly, the procedure of the HoPRs lacks the important factor relevant to determining reasonableness in the involvement of the public in the legislative process, since providing sufficient access to the public to participate relies on the good will of each committee's decision. As a result the public hearings are confined only in the capital city, Addis Ababa, and lacks adequate and sufficient involvements. Secondly, due to lack of sound political culture, citizens are not well conscious of the role of legislature and the benefit that can be secured from participation in the parliamentary hearings. Thirdly, there are no strong political pressure groups capable of influencing the government. Though there are CSO, lack of trust is deterring their participation. Fourthly, the relationship between the parliament and outside researcher organizations such as universities can be said to be immature. Fifthly, MPs are visiting their constituencies only twice a year. Compared to other countries, such as Zambia where a fixed office is established equipped with the professional assistant for each constituency Ethiopian MPs attempts to reach and consult their representatives on a continuous basis, gather information and use it as a source of input into the policy-making process is limited. Moreover, there are no independent organizations that can facilitate the Forum of Parliamentary Dialogue to activate the dialogue between parliament and the citizen.

Lawmaking requires reconciling differences once articulated, as well as pressing the legislature's claim to power against the executive and other power-holders, such as political parties. This requires legislative processes capable of reconciling conflicts and bringing to bear enough expertise to be taken seriously by the executive branch and other actors in the system. However, lack of time, and immense range of policy issues which the parliament deals with make it impossible for any single MP to be an expert in all areas; therefore, it becomes absolutely critical that research information is repackaged and presented in a meaningful form for use by Members of Parliament. In view of this fact, the HoPRs administrative staff is found deficient of the necessary experts to understand the very nature of the different subject matters that need legislation to serve as an informed critic and a refiner of proposals shaped mainly by outside actors in the executive branch. Thus the HoPR is forced to rely on experts of the executive for the scrutiny and analysis expected of draft bills and official reports, and this is again hampering the effort to enhance independent legislation.



The factors affecting the effective policymaking role of the legislatures has been also dealt with. Thus, fusion of powers between the executive and the legislative branches and strong party discipline limited the contribution of a bicameral structure to policymaking process, less involvement of opposition parties in the House, limited involvement of the citizens in the policymaking process and low institutional capacity of the house are the major factors that are impeding the HoPR to appear as strong legislative institution.

### Recommendations

Based on the above facts and reality, the following points are recommended.

1. Fusion of powers together with its resource power, paradoxically, enables the executive to control the legislature's business, and passing any laws which are expedient for the government. In this regard the researcher recommended two options that are used by different countries to curb the executive power. Hence, the Ethiopia government structure should respond to this problem by instituting or retaining bicameral legislature, in which both houses must pass legislation, provide the second chamber a legislative power. Since it is believed that the government's future is not at stake in the second House, members in this House can be freer to counter balance and challenge the action of the executive and maintain check and balance. A second approach to curbing executive power is the election of the responsible house by some form of proportional representation, as in the case of Japan. This often, but not necessarily, leads to coalitions or minority governments. These governments have the support of the legislature when their survival is at stake, but less absolute control over its proceedings. More importantly MPs should fully understand the rationale and justification behind the need for legislature to initiate policies and should extend their loyalty for this conciseness and to the will of the people (as it is stipulated in the Constitution article 54 sub article 4) more than their parties. Therefore, the parliament should take the necessary steps to upgrade the competences through short training especially concerning the needs and importance of their policymaking role, to revolt the executive. The understanding of the MPs can also be leveled through experience of exchange with other countries parliament. Moreover, the parties in the country should be dedicated to present capable candidates who can cope up with the power of the competence of executives for election.
2. The political environment should be enhanced to create a conducive conditions for the growth of rational, disciplined and strong political parties, and to encourage a multi-party setting and promote a more open and plural politics. This will offer the legislature with wide choices of exploring alternative public policies beyond the boundaries of the established party lines.
3. The internal functioning of the House, the human, financial and physical capacity of the House, should be enhanced. The House should be equipped with competent human, financial and material resources to be able to carry out research and identify issues, to draft laws, and to scrutinize the proposed laws. Moreover, the House should promote its partnership with, research institutions, think-tanks and civil society organizations to complement the work of the parliament. More importantly, as most parliamentary countries did, building the confidence of the people on HoPRs, building the capacity of legal drafting, research oversight teams through parliamentary reform deem necessary.
4. When, for several decades, the source of law has been external to the Ethiopian people, such a radical concept as public participation in policymaking is understandably difficult to fully comprehend. What is thus needed to break the stronghold of past tradition is continuous education of the people. Thus the government, the HoPRs, political parties, Medias and other democratic institutions should involve in building the awareness of the people to participate fully in the policymaking process. Moreover, the House should promote independent legal consultants and researchers (policy think-tanks) to flourish, that can initiate, supplement and consult the House on policymaking and other policy issues by producing more scholars in the field of public policymaking.
5. Although the procedure of parliament expresses firmly that the committees should collect information pertaining to different experiences and practices; it does not clearly set in its procedure, the need to participate the public as a constitutional obligation for the house as policy makers and a right for the public. Furthermore which types of law/policy and at which level the participation of the citizen is reasonable and effective is not determined by the procedure. Thus, it is necessary for the parliament to relook in to its rules and procedures for public participation to ensure that the public is offered a meaningful opportunity to public hearings and debates. The citizen should be given a chance to influence policies, and bring in a much more representative policy-making that can realize policy ownership to enhance the implementation of the policies.
6. The government shows its commitment to effective policymaking through different initiatives. One of the initiatives is the establishment of Center for public Policy Studies at the Ethiopian Civil Service University. This can be mentioned as a good beginning to support and enhance the effort of policymaking institutions with sound theoretical tools in the field of policy science through specialized education, consultancy,

training and research. This year's graduates, the first ever in the country, should support the policymaking institutions all over the country through research and consultation and play their pioneer role in professionalizing and improving the policymaking capacity in all over the country. One more, the center should promote its services to enable the institutions to make use of the professional support in every dimension.

Thus, the researcher believes that the above measures, if implemented, will ensure effectiveness of legislature in policymaking process in Ethiopia.

### Future Research Areas Recommended

The thesis focused on the role and function of legislature in the policymaking process. It also tried to show the close tie between the legislature and the government. The role of the third organ of the government-the judiciary and other non-institutional policymaking actors has not been examined. Thus research should investigate the role and function of these actors. Moreover future academic researches have to also reckon the other two functions, representational and oversight role of legislature.

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